

A RELIGIO-ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF TIV THOUGHT SYSTEM ON VIRGINITY

BY

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**BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED TO POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL, BENUE
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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this thesis titled: “*A Religio-Ethical Analysis of Tiv Thought System on Virginity*” has been duly presented by Patricia Mwuese Saluun (BSU/AR/PhD/09/1297) of the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts, Benue State University, Makurdi and has been approved by the examiners.

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DECLARATION

I, Patricia Mwuese Saluun (BSU/AR/PhD/09/1297) do hereby declare:

- a) That this thesis has been written by me and it is an account of my research
- b) That no part of this thesis to the best of my knowledge has been written, presented and published at any time anywhere for the award of any degree.
- c) And also that all the quotations and references herein have been duly acknowledged.

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SIGN:

DATE:

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God who makes the impossible possible.

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No matter how blessed, talented and endowed a person is, he or she cannot achieve any success in life without the favour and protection of the Almighty God and the help of other people. With regards to the above, I reserve the most special gratitude to the Almighty God who has given me the gift of life, good health, security, adequate knowledge, understanding and enabling environment for the completion of this work. Once again, I say a big thanks to God for turning my dream into a reality.

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ABSTRACT

The subject of sex and everything related to it particularly as it bothers on the issue of virginity is always treated with caution because of its sensitivity in marital life. Previous Existing studies on Virginity as a concept and tradition in the Tiv thought have been approached from historical, psychological and medical perspectives with little attention paid to its religious dimension. Therefore, this work examined the concept of virginity as a practice and tradition the Tiv thought with a view of analysing it from a religio-ethical point of view. Hence, the paper evaluated the practice of Tiv Thought System on Virginity, its place in the past and in the contemporary time in the contexts of growing moral challenges of chastity and prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases as well as HIV/AIDS. The study was premised on the Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian ethical theory which was beefed up with data generated through oral interview with 100 people comprising 60% female and 40% male respondents and observation. The data was descriptively analysed. Consequently, it is discovered that the practice of virginity is gradually fading away due to exposure of the young men and women to western culture that is characterised by nudity, sex film and pornography through uncensored social media. Therefore, the work recommends the revival and religious and secular teachings related moral values, sex ethics, dignity of man and woman and sanctity of sex, which have a long way to preserving and observing the culture and tradition of female virginity in the contemporary Tiv society.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Moral actions vary from society to society. However, there are areas of morals that are intense and permeate all societies. For instance, the ethical imperative of 'thou shall not kill' is society embracing. There is virtually no society where the respect for human life is not held in high esteem. In the African society, there are taboos and rules of conduct that constitute the ontological structure of human relationships. Morality for the Africans is therefore tied to the consciousness of right conduct by reason of which things are accepted as well as denied as they affect individuals, families, communities and, in fact, all and sundry (Omoregbe 5). Right and wrong are, therefore, calculated in the interest of beneficence or negative effect on the society. Thus vices such as corruption, stealing, fraud, rumour mongering, and sexual misconduct are formidably frowned at while virtues like honesty, sexual appropriation, fidelity, virginity, faithfulness, and prudence are unreservedly cherished.

Virginity which is the focus of this work is a crucial moral value. Generally, the conditions involved in the preservation of virginity vary from one ethnic nationality to the other. However, at one extreme its preservation is for the validity of a marriage. Thus, Akiga affirms that:

Tiv:

Man Kasev vea rumun yô, orvesen u her la a mough ayila orvesen uadza ve, a va la, akaa a na er, pine ingyor you aluer ia vande ndzughul a wanye yô, i or ... gadiyô aluer ia vande ndzughul a or man ia or hegen gayo, man Iyange Kwagh a mase duwen jime yô, wanye la nana na nagh sha Ngobuakeng... nana pase sha Iyange la yo, a kera lu kwagh yum ga, kpa nana tuna tsung Ishe la kure man a va mase fanyo, or u nan vihi nan la nan na nagh Sha ngobua keng ga yo i hingir Iyongo je dzan dzan Ishe la iva kpe (204).

English:

After the acceptance by women the eldest man there calls the eldest man that comes and asked him to inquire from his sister if she had been tempered with by a young man, she should make known", if she had been tempered with and it is discovered at last the young man that is responsible must appease with a female cow. If she makes known on that day it may not be taken serious on the discovery, the person who spoiled her shall offer sacrifice with a female cow failure, creates enmity between the two families to an extent that the marriage becomes dissolved.

Supporting the above view, Tarbo says that, after the two parties had given their consent, the elders of both communities inquired about the virginity of the girl. If one confessed that she had sexual relations with a man, then the culprit was fined, he paid a fine and the girl had to go through *akombo* called *megh* (cleansing). The culprit also paid the virginity award to the mother of the girl, which the husband would have to give if the girl were found to be a virgin (28). If a girl had had such relations but denied it, and it was discovered after the contract had been concluded, the girl and the man who had disflowered her were severely punished. The man would sometimes certainly have to pay a cow; otherwise, it would give rise to a quarrel, which might end in the annulment of the marriage. (28).

Akiga and Tarbo shared a similar view that virginity in marriage was appreciated and the girls who were found disvirgined before marriage were punished and the ones who maintained their virginity were applauded. However, recent developments have brought about changes to the indigenous Tiv traditional view of virginity. To Akiga, these changes have permeated every facet of marriage among the Tiv so much that one hardly finds values of marriage as they have been translocated and transformed completely to strange values with attendant consequences on the ethical values of the marriage institution in all its ramifications among the Tiv (6).

In the Tiv society, a lot of importance was placed on the virginity of women:

An unmarried woman wore Ikyôôr (the shell of a snail) on her neck. This symbolized her virginity. The shell could only be removed by her husband after the consummation of the marriage. If the husband found that he was the first to know his wife, he took a she-goat known as ivo akôôr (goat-snail) to the mother-in-law in appreciation of the mother's role in bringing up her daughter. A mother, who gave her daughter into marriage and received a she-goat in recognition of her daughter's virginity, was a proud woman (Wegh *Marriage, Family and the Church*...119).

Today, virginity is no longer cherished among the Tiv. Several reasons have been advanced by several scholars as to the causes of the present revolt against virginity. Most young people today are looking for a meaning in their life outside of the traditional best practices.

Igbum attributes this moral decadence to several sociological reasons. These include, among others, the decreasing role of parents in the upbringing of children, the various means of mass communication and the greater degree of freedom enjoyed by these young people, the advent of western culture and way of life (12). He thus argues that the Macro-western culture has sheltered the micro African culture and so inflicted a deadening blow on such vital elements like virginity. The moral value of virginity is no doubt of paramount importance as has been attested to by Echekwube when he says:

Virginity at wedding was very much cherished, that in those days when a girl was being led to the bride's room, she was given a white cloth to consummate her marriage, if there was blood stain; it was a sign that the girl was a virgin. The in-law received her with great joy and sent precious gift to her 'parents for their efforts in training a well-matured girl (10).

Today, however, virginity is no longer a main precondition for marriage. Some young men preparing to marry no longer seriously consider that they will marry a virgin. This has contributed to the waywardness of young girls who are in the universities, most of them abandon lectures preferring to spend their time in wine bars, beer parlours, etc looking for men that they could "serve", having less time for their studies

and at the end of the day, resort to examination malpractice so as to pass their examinations.

The first institution of learning is the family where moral values are learnt. Once these moral tenets are properly taught and strictly upheld in childhood, the process of transiting from adolescence to adulthood, they would treasure, respect and acknowledge these social values which must be brought to play on national life and there would be absolute peace in the society.

It is a fact that knowledge about human sexuality, reproductive health, and sexual ethics remains a veritable tool for a sustainable family. The child has to be protected against the abuse of sex and be helped to form the right sex habits from the very start. Sex is good, it is powerful but sex needs to be controlled and taken at the right time. In view of the above, sex education should create an awareness filled with respect for marriage and virginity (Igyeseh 84).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Religion has played a dominant role in the life of the African man. Since religion has coloured every scheme in Africa, its cultural distinctive attributes are usually interpreted as such. For this reason, early and later interpreters of African cultures did so against the prism of African religion. This could be seen in the works of Bolaji Idowu, John Mbiti, Alyward Shorter, etc. With the changing trend in modern society, secularism has deeply affected the thinking of modern man and the social configuration of our society in the areas of work, eating, rest, pleasure and marriage. This paradigm shift has necessitated the change in values as well, hence values previously adhered to, are beginning to lose their force. It is for this reason that virginity, a previously held value in Tiv thought system, has lost its significance. The resultant effect has been chaotic immorality and indecency. This has also affected

family and societal values which were dependent on traditional religion. Western education, civilisation and Christianity have one part or another to play in the disintegration, abuse and the elimination of the traditional values of the Tiv, the result of the changes has always been conceptualised as 'bad' for Tiv heritage and cultural values (Torkula *The Cultural Institution...* 70).

Post-modern Tiv society has witnessed a decay in its moral culture. There is a sharp decline in morality and religious values. In their place there is a new culture of immorality, pornography, incest, lesbianism, homosexuality, nudity, and lewdness. These are all foreign to the Tiv culture and have impacted negatively on the Tiv society. Trust and responsibility have been pushed aside and in their stead, a new culture of unfaithfulness and lack of respect has suddenly become the order of the age.

However, among the Tiv of Central Nigeria, so many scholars have concerned themselves about some issues of academic interest based basically on their area perspectives. For example, Shagbaor Francis Wegh in his book titled, *Between Continuity and Change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and Modernity* asserts that chastity was a responsibility of parents to children and therefore the society cannot hold the children responsible for a contrary act (60). He was talking from a sociological perspective, thereby, leaving the religious import into the matter.

Similarly, Tyugh Abeghe narrated the socio-political ordeal of the Tiv in his book titled, *The Tiv and Tiv Riots*, focused on both remote and immediate factors that aggravated the Tiv riots that eliminated human capacity and scattered the economic means of the Tiv since 1960 and the spillover of that downgrade economy up to the present contemporary society but did not hinge on the religious life of the people (64-82).

Relatedly, Dominic Vaachia Yuhe, writing on *The Encounter of Tiv Religious and Moral Values with Catholicism in the Time of "Secularisation"*, maintained that

through their catchesis, the missionaries got rid of the cohesion and the balance of the traditional beliefs and the mystical powers of men. The culmination of this kind of descralisation is that the world will be gradually deprived of its sacral character as man and nature become the object of rational-causal explanation, where man will become independent of his traditional religion and live by reason, face to face with objectified physical nature (iii-iv).

Yuhe had a glimpse of the long term implication of this religious consciousness but little effort was made in his explanation to lay bare the religious implication of abandoning the religious undertone of abandoning the concept of virginity in Tiv religion.

Again, Alfred Akawe Torkula in his book titled, *The Cosmology in Tiv world View*, elaborated on some critical institutions in Tiv cultural heritage like witchcraft (*tsav*), faires (*adzov*), justice (*Swem*), sacred Tiv music and dance, but failed completely to discuss the religious symbolism and social implication of the cult of virginity (*Ikyoor*) (6-9).

Furthermore, in his article in the Tiv in Central Nigeria, Philip Terdoo Ahile discusses the "socio-political challenges facing the Tiv in Nigeria" with emphasis on the problems of rebellion, aggression, domination, identity and economy. He called for the promotion, preservation and celebration of the totality of Tiv cultural heritage and history, through publications, conferences, symposia and sustained campaigns involving all Tiv (1-11).

Much recent is yet another work on the Tiv by Mvendaga Jibo titled *Elite Politics in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, 1993-2014*. He vividly captured the prime movers of politics and the challenges of leadership in Tivland as well as the

challenges of interethnic politics in Nigeria but failed to look at the religious aspects (157).

Therefore, this research attempts to close the gap in scholarship by taking the aspect of religious practices as regards their impact on Tiv society and the society in general. The overall expectation is that there shall be a wholistic approach to paradigms of socio-religious integration and moral development of the people.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this work is to make a religio-ethical analysis of Tiv thought system on virginity. To achieve this, the objectives are to:

- a. identify Tiv thought system on virginity.
- b. analyse the thought system from a religio-ethical point of view.
- c. bring to light, the benefits of observing the ethics of virginity among the Tiv
- d. make recommendations that will help the society in dealing with some of the contemporary health challenges.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This thesis is divided into two parts, namely data collection and data analysis. This is explained as follows:

1.4.1 Data Collection Procedure

Information needed for this research were generated through oral interview and observation. The procedure for generating data took the forms of oral interview and observation.

Oral interview: The researcher asked questions orally to both literate and non-literate informants. A total number of 100 respondents were interviewed. 51 were female informants representing 51% of the population while 49 were males representing 49% of the population. These respondents were drawn from 24 farmers,

30 civil servants (educated people) and 29 businessmen and traders. All these were people who are acquainted with Tiv socio-cultural and religious life and were knowledgeable on other related aspects of Tiv ethical life. The design was to obtain as much as possible views that are not based on sentiments.

Observation: Here, the researcher visited villages and rural communities as well as major towns in Tiv which were selected for investigation, covering atleast the five geo-political zones that make up the local government areas in Tiv. The five geopolitical zones are Jemgbagh, Jechira, Kwande, Sankera and MINDA. Jechira zone has Vandeikya and Konshisha, which the researcher interviewed eight people within Vandeikya Local Government area, Jemgbagh has Buruku, Tarka and Gboko, twenty one persons were interviewed in Gboko. Sankera has Ukum, Logo and Katsina Ala. In this zone, the researcher used Logo and eighteen people were interviewed. Kwande Zone has Ushongo and Kwande itself and nineteen people were interviewed. Finally, MINDA has Makurdi, Guma, Gwer East and Gwer West; the researcher chose Makurdi and thirty two people were interviewed.

The study also used secondary sources drawing materials from books and similarly publications, dictionaries, electronic sources, magazines, newspapers and periodicals; the search through this method has balanced between what has changed and what has remained unchanged, succeeded in striking a balance thus arriving at a sound conclusion.

1.4.2 Data Analysis

Analysis of data generated through oral interview and observation were carried out descriptively using simple percentages. The two data were integrated into one unified whole so as to enrich the researcher's interpretation and conclusion. As used in this research, the simple percentage formula is captured thus:

N represents the number of respondents

TN represents the total number of respondents

% represents percentage used for the calculation. This is expressed as $\frac{N}{TN} \times \frac{100}{1} \%$

The data used constitute information generated from 100 people who are natives of Tiv in the fourteen local government areas found in Benue State. All the data generated were analysed using the utilitarian theory.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research work is to create awareness to the Africans in general and the Tiv in particular who have the mentality of looking at their culture as inferior. The research will revive the Tiv concept of morality.

This work is significant as it forms the bed-rock upon which other academic endeavours of this nature could dwell upon for further researches in the area of ethics and societal morals. The study is necessary and significant as it serves as a wake-up call in the area of sexual morality to lead the Tiv to behave in accordance with the wishes of a divine authority and also behave in a way that benefits society at large rather than their own narrow self interest.

This work is, therefore, meant to reawaken religious bodies and families in their roles: their complementary roles towards the development of the society seems to be weakened and as such should be checked to enhance a responsible and collective force towards the reinstitutionalisation of female virginity in this generation to go down history as a generation of morals. This will be the pride of the world in general, Africans, Nigerians and the Tiv people in particular.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research work is concerned with a religio-ethical analysis of the Tiv thought system on virginity as an aspect of Tiv culture. It is therefore limited to the

Tiv society. The study has explored how virginity is regarded among the Tiv to unveil the problem associated with it and the valuable aspects of virginity. It is limited to the fourteen local government areas in Tivland. These are: Buruku, Konshisha, Kwande, Tarka, Logo, Gwer East, Gwer West, Makurdi, Vandeikya, Gboko, Ukum, Katsina-Ala, Guma and Ushongo Local Government Areas.

Pre-marital sex was discouraged and virginity observed in the fourteen local governments in Tiv land but within these local governments, Gwer West and East observed with modifications. While the remaining twelve local governments in Tiv used *ikyoor* on young girl's neck for protecting her virginity until marriage when it will be removed by her husband through *igbianjov* priestess before the husband could have access to her. In Gwer West and Gwer East, a girl would tie the shell on her neck but when she become of age, the shell could be removed by the *Ingbianjov* priestess and she will enter *Ikyar* until the right husband comes for her. This practice was also meant to protect her from violation by unauthorized men. The main religions interacted were Christianity and African traditional religion.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one deals with the general background to the study. While chapter two provides the review of related literature, chapter three is an overview of perspectives on the preservation of virginity in Tiv religion and culture. Chapter four focuses on the importance of *ikyôôr* cult in the preservation of virginity. Chapter five examines the discontinuity of *ikyôôr* and its moral effect on Tiv society. Chapter six rounds up with the summary, contribution to knowledge, recommendations and conclusion.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Utilitarianism is an ethical theory which holds that the morality of an act consists essentially of its utility as a means for attainment of the happiness of man. Happiness in most cases is considered as temporal. In fact, if you wish to know whether an action is good or bad morally, find out whether it is useful or not. If it is useful, it is good, if it is harmful, it is bad (Eboh 45). Some ethicists view utilitarianism as a consequential theory because it generally tends to emphasise the consequences of actions. Within this school of thought the consequences of an act determine its moral value; if it is beneficial to many, then it is good, but if it causes harm to the larger number, then it is bad.

J. Bentham tends to equate happiness to pleasure, claiming that pleasure is that good which is desired by all men while pain is that evil which all men seek to avoid. He therefore argues that one state of affairs is to be considered better than another only if it involves a greater balance of pleasure over pain. For him, good does not concern that which each person pursues and believes to be his own happiness. He suggests that legislators should see it as their duty to strike a harmony between private interest and public interest. Thus Bentham identifies his utilitarian principles with the political affairs of the society (qtd. in Chukwujekwu 56).

Chukwujekwu alludes to J. S. Mill's version of utilitarianism, which is said to represent the social and altruistic aspect of utilitarianism. Mill maintains that the first principle of utilitarianism is the utility or greatest happiness which holds that actions are right in proportion to the happiness they promote, and are wrong as in the degree to which they tend to promote (qtd. in Chukwujeku 57).

There are, however, two broad dimensions of utilitarianism. The distinction between these two forms of utilitarianism lies in the area of focus. While Act-utilitarianism focuses on particular actions, rule-utilitarianism is concerned with rules.

1.8.1 Act-Utilitarianism

This form of utilitarianism holds that what makes an action right is maximising total or average utility. For act utilitarians, the rightness or wrongness of an action should be decided on the basis of the consequences of such an action. Those actions that produce good results, that is, the greatest good for the greatest number, are good, while those that produce evil result, which is pain or unhappiness are evil. Here, as long as an action will produce the best possible results for the greatest number of people, that action should be performed.

1.8.2 Rule-Utilitarianism

This form of utilitarianism holds that the right action is that which is in consonance with those rules which would maximise utility if everybody accepted them. The operational word in this rule is “everybody” and, therefore, any rule that is to be adopted must be that which would be capable of producing useful consequences for the greatest number of people. When such a rule has been adopted, not to obey it would mean to act immorally because there is no justification whatsoever to violate such a rule that is capable of producing the greatest possible good for the greatest number of people (Eboh 46-47).

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF VIRGINITY

Virginity for Peschke is a state of being whereby a girl or woman has not experienced sexual union (389). According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, there are two elements in virginity: the material element, the absence, in the past and in the present of all complete and voluntary delectation whether from lust or from the lawful use of marriage and the formal element, that is the firm resolution to abstain forever from sexual pleasure (812).

Virginity is the state of being a virgin. It is derived from the Latin *Virgo* which means “sexually inexperienced woman” (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (22). In line with the Latin, the English word is often used with a wider reference, by relaxing the age, gender or sexual criteria. Hence more matured women can be virgins, men can be virgins and potential initiates into many fields can be colloquially termed virgins.

Virginity signifies a condition of no sexual participation or experience, being in a state of its original pure or natural condition that is not changed, touched, spoiled, but fresh and not marked. It also signifies the reverence for bodily integrity which is suggested by a virtuous nature and is both found in men and women. Physically, it implies a bodily integrity, a visible evidence of which exist only in women. In human females, the hymen is a thin film of membrane situated just inside the vulva which can partially occlude the entrance to vagina canal. It is flexible and can be stretched or torn during first engagement in sexual intercourse (*Catholic Encyclopedia* 183).

Throughout history, the presence of an intact hymen has been seen by many as physical evidence of virginity, particularly alongside “proof of blood”, virginity as

proved by the presence of vaginal bleeding from intercourse connected to the tearing of the hymen. The presence of a hymen is often considered to be an indication of virginity, but is no guarantee given that some degree of sexual activity may occur without rupturing the hymen. The lack of a hymen is an even less clear indication of virginity lost as the hymen's shape, thickness and coverage is extremely varied, and one that occlude the entrance to the vaginal canal may be broken through a means other than sexual activity. It is likely that almost all women are born with a hymen, but not necessary ones that will experience a measurable change during first experience of sexual intercourse (*Catholic Encyclopedia* 813).

There may also be varying definitions as to the type or extent of sexual activity that is considered by a person to terminate the stage of virginity as the definition of virginity is problematic by some experiences. For example, the prevailing notion of virginity as lost only through vaginal intercourse is problematised by homo-sexuality as well as by some youths who engage in oral or anal sex for the purpose of retaining their virginity. The issue is further complicated by the availability of hymenorrhaphy surgical procedures which repairs or replaces the hymen, marketed to both sexually active women to restore their "virginity", as well as women who are concerned that their hymens may not provide adequate proof of their virginity through bleeding or the perceived tightness of their vagina (*Catholic Encyclopedia* 813).

In the majority of women, the hymen is sufficiently vestigial as to pose no obstruction to the entry way of the vagina. The presence of a broken hymen may therefore indicate that the vagina has been penetrated but also that it was broken via physical activity or the use of a tampon or dildo. Many women possess such thin, fragile hymens, easily stretched and already perforated at birth, that the hymen can be

broken in childhood without the woman even being aware of it, often through athletic activities. A slip while riding a bicycle may on occasion result in the bicycle's saddle-horn entering the introitus just far enough to break the hymen. In rare cases a woman may possess an imperforated hymen that prevents the release of menstrual discharge. A surgical procedure known as hymenotomy which creates an opening in the hymen is sometimes required to avert deleterious health effects (*Catholic Encyclopedia* 813).

Virginity has been associated with purity, chastity, valour and godliness. In ancient times, it was valued, protected and guarded with sanctity, as well as held in a high esteem. Societies advocated for young girls to have moral sexual chastity so as to produce their kind to perpetuate their race through families, villages, lineages and clans, so, everything possible was done to nurture an unadulterated womanhood from generation to another because womanhood and its sexual heritage were not to be abused.

A female that is found not to be a virgin was labeled unfit to marry. This is in line with what Udoh asserted when he said:

On sexual relationships and intercourse, the female virgins were expected to follow clearly spelt out traditional norms and socially approved rites and practices...The bride had to enter into marriage thoroughly free from pre-marital sexual relationship not to talk of pregnancy (63-64).

But over the years this precious virtue has been thrown away. It is no longer valued. Not long ago, there were many young people who valued their purity and adhered to the principle of no sex before marriage. But today, one would be shocked at the urge that people are engaged in sexual activities. With all the warning of the dangers of pre-marital sexual activity and the serious threat of HIV and AIDS, there are still a great number of unmarried teenagers that engage in sex regularly.

Virginity plays a very important role in humanity. It is greatly upheld as an essential part of the total human life and its truth affects an individual's soul and mind.

According to Peschke, it is a state of being whereby a girl or woman has not experienced sexual union (389).

Atuu in a paper presented at the First National Workshop on Tiv marriage and Burial Customs titled, "Incest Issues, Sex Taboos in Kinship Relations" made it clear that virginity was highly observed in Tiv as shown in the *Ikyôôr* cult:

When young girls are growing they hang on them emblem which is a symbol of don't touch, it is believed that a man who forces them into sex or does it with their permission will become eunuch from the curse. Even when a woman is married sex can only occur when the symbol emblem has been cut off by an old woman. There were certain unpleasant ramifications which made the Tiv people to develop the cult of *Ikyôôr* (27).

Atuu's work on the value attached to virginity in the olden days in Tiv society is commendable. He, however, failed to link the causes of the changing trend. This work has therefore gone beyond simply appreciating the concept of virginity but went further and examined the causes of the changing trend with the hope of making a meaningful contribution.

Wegh in his *Marriage, Family and the Church in Tiv*, noted that the Tiv traditionally placed a lot of importance on the virginity of the girl who usually wore *Ikyôôr* (the shell of a snail) around her neck as an outward symbol of her virginity. The shell could be removed by her husband after the consummation of the marriage. If she was truly a virgin the husband was required to give a she-goat known as *ivo akôôr* (the she-goat of the snail) to his mother-in-law in appreciation of her role in bringing up a good wife. The gesture of bringing a she-goat to the mother-in-law is described as *akôôr a saghen* (untying the snails), a symbolism affirming the virginity of the woman at the time of the consummation of the marriage.

This symbolism was however lost if a girl was found to have slept with someone and lost her virginity before marriage. In this case, her mother lost not only the *Ivo akôôr* but also suffered embarrassment. The anxiety to see a daughter safely

married was one of the reasons for early marriage (Wegh 76-77). This cultural emphasis on virginity appears to be biased against the women (the girl in question and her mother). No punitive measures were put in place against men who had lost their virginity. Though Wegh has opened our eyes to see the value of virginity of a girl in Tiv society and the role of the parents, he ignored the modern attitudes of the parents towards the upbringing of their children. This study has advanced the argument to fill in this gap.

Sharing the same view, Gbenda in his book, *Traditional Sexuality and HIV/AIDS Prevalence in Nigeria* contends that:

In Tiv society sex was considered as sacred. Sex issues were not habitually discussed openly or publically. The discussion about the subject was held in hallowed tones outside the learning of the children. It was meant for adults and within the framework of marriage. In this regard, sex serves the purpose of procreation for the continuation of community, pleasure, personal interaction and religion...it is generally agreed that sex should only be practiced by adults who can make sound decision (125).

Gbenda's view is helpful in understanding and appreciation of the place of sex in marriage in the olden days. Though this is not the case in the 21st century, this study has advanced in this regard to fill the gap.

The foregoing point is further buttressed by Russell in his book, *The History of Western Philosophy*. Describing the morality of Sir Thomas Moore in the 'Utopian Society', he explained that, in Utopia, all things are held in common, there is no private property, everything is shared by all but as for marriage both men and women are sharply punished if not found virgin when they marry and the house holder of any house in which such misconduct has occurred is liable to incur infamy for carelessness (263).

In another contribution, Ityavar, in his book, *The Changing Socio-Economic Role of the Tiv Woman* relates that a girl who lost her virginity before marriage

attracted shame not only on herself but the parents. The *ingbianjôv* (virginity guardian) ritual was often performed on daughters with this, a young man would be afraid to have sex with her. A man who had sex with girls who undertook the virginity guardian rituals would automatically become impotent. Men valued their potency and as such were always afraid of coming near girls who had virginity rituals. It was then very unusual to find girls who had sex before marriage. The husband was always the first to sleep with the girl and break her virginity (35). The author made us to understand that the *ingbianjôv* rituals (virginity guardian) were often performed by a protective major on the girls so that they will remain chaste until their time of marriage. He had not told us why the Tiv have abandoned this ritual performance.

Dwelling on the same issue Joseph Gbenda in his work, *An Appraisal of Ethical Values in Tiv Religion* explains that preservation of the virginity of a girl was a crucial moral value. If the virginity was broken before marriage, the husband would send a perforated cloth to the girl's father, which signified the loss of virginity of their daughter. It was a serious violation and source of shame, not only to the living members of the community, but also the ancestors, for a girl to lose her virginity (33). Thus Gbenda here introduces the dimension of ancestors in the dispute associated with the loss of virginity among girls. However, Gbenda's view does not cover the 21st century dimension that the virtue of virginity has taken in the Tiv traditional setting. This work has made effort to fill up the lacuna.

Wegh further explained in his work, *Between Continuity and Change* that, today virginity is no longer an issue in marriage. No young man preparing to marry seriously considers that he will marry a virgin; rather many young men may no longer expect this of their future wives (85-86). Some even think it is unfair to expect women to be virgins at the time of their marriage. Others argue that virgins are out of date and

that no man is ready to marry a virgin in this age because she will lack experience, although experience has also shown that this belief is not tenable because many people prefer to marry virgins. The author has identified a drastic change from what used to be. The change, however, is not as a result of Western influence but in terms of opinion of young men.

In the work titled *Recovering the Lost Dignity of Humanity* Pila asserts that cultural and traditional values especially those of virginity formally held in high esteem are discarded. Parents no more mind the shame their daughters bring to them as they get into marriage already disvirgined (2-3).

This change in opinion expressed by Pila above sometimes assumes an alarming dimension as when some people prefer pregnancy to virginity as a prerequisite for marriage. In a related manner, Oladosu in his article, "Traditional Circumcision among the People of Ife" notes that the issues of chastity and preservation of virginity are the most common motivations for the performance of female circumcision. According to him performing the operation in its mild form, the sexual desire of the girl is decreased, thus hindering the chances of promiscuity. In its more severe forms, as in stitching up the virginal orifice, which occurs in some African communities, the girl is physically restrained from accepting sexual advance from the opposite sex. The importance of maintaining virginity is utmost, as the girl is meant to be approached only by her future husband and ensures her virginity for the moment (75).

Wood in his *Sex and the New Morality* observes that there are some ethnic groups which allow pre-marital relations while on the other hand we find those who demand total female chastity before marriage. Like in Somalia, part of Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt and part of Mali, girls' clitoris are not only severely cut but the

remaining part is closed or stitched to maintain the virginity of the girl until the night of her marriage (157). To the Bantu of South Africa for instance, virginity testing was originally intended to ensure the purity of the young brides who were required to prove their chastity before their parents and future in-laws.

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF MORALITY

This could also be viewed as a concept of interest in every human society. In African society and Tiv in particular, morality is observed in the family, in place of work, at community meetings and every place of human engagement. The word morality is from the Latin "more" which means habits, customs ways of life and standards of human behaviour. The word is akin to the Greek ethos which means character. This refers to good or bad, right or wrong behaviour, conduct, etc. Both terms (morality and ethics) are often used interchangeably. Morality deals with discovering, elucidating, justifying and applying criteria for evaluating the rightness or wrongness of human actions (Shishima and Apenda 1-2).

Defining the term morality Raphael asserts that morality is the concern about norms or values, the ideas of right and wrong, good and bad and about what should be done (8). Again Mbiti in his book, *Introduction to African Religion*, says the reality of morals thus begets such virtues like friendship, compassion, love, honesty, justice, courage, self control, helpfulness, bravery and so on (15). On the other hand, it instills people's dislike for vices like cheating, treachery, theft, selfishness, disharmony, killing, etc.

In a related manner, Taylor in his work, *Freedom Anarchy and Law: An Introduction to Political Philosophy* asserts that:

Morals guide people in doing what is right and good for both their own sake and that of their community. They help people do duties to society and enjoy certain rights, it is morals which have produced the virtues the society appreciate and endeavour to preserve, such as friendship, compassion... On

the opposite side morals sharpen people's dislike and avoidance of vices like cheating, treachery, theft ... and so on (103).

Similarly, Omoregbe in his book, *Ethics: A Systematic and Historical Study* maintain that, morality is universal because the basis of morality is human nature and since human nature is universal, morality is also universal. He explains that it is true that different cultures do have different moral practices that certain cultures consider as right what some other cultures consider as wrong. For instance, kissing in the street or in public places, sending one's aged parents to old people's home rather than taking care of them in one's own house are morally unacceptable in Africa but morally acceptable in Europe and America. But this does not show that the basic moral principles are not universal. In addition, what it does show is that although the moral principles themselves are universal their application is relative to varying situations. Thus they are applied more strictly in some cultures than in others owing to the peculiar circumstances of each culture. Thus, for example, the moral principle which prohibits incest is applied more strictly in some cultures than in others. In Europe for example, a man could marry his third cousin but in most parts of Africa this would not be allowed (14-15). Once it is discovered that there is blood relationship between two people, even a very distant one marriage between them is dissolved.

Omoregbe in his work *Comparative Religion: Christianity and Other World Religions in Dialogue*, maintains that, morality for the African is therefore tied to consciousness and by reason of which things are accepted as well as denied as they affect individual families, community, in fact all and sundry (5).

Similarly another British neo-idealist, Bosanquet in his book, *The History of Western Philosophy* sees morality as a process of self-realization, self-fulfillment, but the individual can only attain self-fulfillment in and through the state. In doing this, he

must conform with the general of the state (57). Smedes, in his *Mere Morality* buttresses this assertion thus:

We do have and they are sometimes between real moral options. The choice we make can put us in the wrong or leaves us in the right, and being in harmony with God's design for our humanity. Morality then emerges from what we are as human beings. To demoralise life is to dehumanise it the call to morality is an invitation to human life (1).

For Smedes, morality is an instrument that determines whether man's actions are in conformity with God's plan. Even though God does not impose his will on the people, his ultimate desire is that people should make the right choices. In another view, B. M. Bierman asserts that morality is:

The quality attributed to human action by reason of its conformity to the standards or rules according to which it should be regulated. This supposes on the one hand that human actions are voluntary and responsible, and on the other hand, there are standards and rules by which human conduct should be measured (29).

Bierman's views are correct because man is a rational being and should be accountable for his actions. He is endowed with a conscience that ought to keep him in tune with God's dictates as regards the rightness and wrongness of an act. But people argue that some humans do not have their conscience due to the fact that they exhibit no sense of rightness or wrongness in anything they do. The fact remains that some suppress their conscience. For example, a girl who chooses to be drunk to allow herself to be deflowered by her boyfriend does it deliberately, not out of ignorance, which is why she chooses to do it in abnormal state of mind. Without morality in any given society, there will be chaos or anarchy.

The term morality is derived from the Greek word 'ethos'. It originally denoted a location or a place where people live together, but as time went on the term acquired other meanings which include customs, temperament, character, a way of thinking and of behaviour. From the word *ethos*, Aristotle then coined the adjective

ethikos which had the same meaning as the Latin *mos* or *moralis* and the English *mores* (Anyam, *Morality and Discipline...* 166).

It is difficult to have a universally accepted definition of morality. This is due to the various ways in which the term is employed and the implications of those usages. For instance, in most discourses, morality as a term is employed either normatively or descriptively. According to Bernard, when used descriptively, the term morality refers to some code of conduct put forward by a society, some other groups, such as a religion or accepted by an individual religion, or accepted by an individual for his/her own behaviour (qtd. in Anyam 166). Bernard maintains that when used normatively morality means “a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons” (qtd. in Anyam 166). In the same way, *Wikipedia* provides an explanation of the description and normative sense in which the term morality is employed.

In its descriptive sense, ‘morality’ refers to personal or cultural values or codes of conduct. It does not connote objective claims of right or wrong, but only refers to that which is considered right or wrong. Descriptive ethics is the branch of philosophy which studies morality in this sense. In its normative sense, ‘morality’ refers to whatever (if anything) is actually right or wrong, which may be independent of the values or more held by any particular peoples or culture. Normative ethics is the branch of philosophy which studies morality in this (Anyam 166).

Bernard observes that to use morality in a descriptive sense (to refer to an actually existing code of conduct put forward by a society) results in a denial that there is universal morality, one that applies to all human beings. He sees such as rather misleading. On the other hand, he adds that to use morality normatively is to imply that it is universal and that all rational persons must endorse that code. Thus,

morality seems to defy a short universally accepted definition. However, to give up on a definition of morality at this point will be counter-productive; hence we would borrow the definition of morality from Anyam that morality is the differentiation among intentions, decisions and actions between those that are good or right and bad or wrong. In other words morality is the bedrock of values (whether legal, religious, social, communal or personal) upon which ethics as a discipline depends for justification/evaluation of human conduct (Anyam, *Morality and Discipline...* 167).

Morality is viewed from different contexts; examples include African morality, social morality, closed morality, open morality of human action, moral judgement moral law. These shall be explained in greater details below.

2.2.1 African Morality

The African traditional society is embedded with the ideas or sense of good as well as bad; that which is unanimously accepted is seen as good and that which is unanimously condemned is considered bad and abominable. Hence African life could be expressed through their morality; for instance, sin is frowned at because of its social effect i.e. breaking of a taboo could be an offence against the whole community and to rectify such relationships, a communal religious ritual must be performed. This practice implies that in personal actions, the individual must hold the community members at heart, Africans believe that their morality emerges from religion and is given by God whom they call *Aondo* (God) from the beginning of the world. Tiv morality is referred to as *gbaaondo*. *Gbaaondo* therefore stands for the truth, justice unity, brotherhood and that which is truly right (Gbenda, *African Theism...* 26).

Social morality: This involves both the society and individual. It is the responsibility of every society to prevent the strong and the greedy from exploiting the weak, denying them of fair share of what belongs to them. In other words, it is the

duty of every member of the society to contribute his/her own quota to the development of the society. In return, it is the responsibility or duty of every society to provide for every member, a good job with which he will be able to cater for his needs. Every member of the society needs to be morally matured for the society to make any meaningful progress. It is therefore necessary, that any society that is working towards progress or development should do away with bribery and corruption, embezzlement, lack of respect for public wellbeing. With this there will be fair sharing and our young girls will not give in for money and this will stop pre-marital sex and prostitution.

Closed morality: this is the morality that deals with obligation. It is also the morality of the ordinary man whose horizon does not go beyond the society where an individual finds him or herself against a society which sees itself different from other groups. Such a society tries to maintain itself in existence and also presents its unit as well as identify by imposing certain roles on its members. Members of a society only observe the rules whenever the society exerts on them. It is also this pressure that gives them the sense of obligation.

Open morality: this is the opposite of closed morality. This kind of morality is always found in the open society and a dynamic society. It goes beyond the family, tribal and national interest but rather opens to the general interest of mankind. This kind of morality is usually found in the open society which has nothing to do with the morality of obligation, and not usually is the result of social pressure. It can be regarded as a universal and ideal morality which has its origin from the mystical experiences of important and religious leaders such as prophets in Israel. This morality can simply be regarded as open morality. Therefore the people who are opportune to have this drew followers to themselves.

Morality of human actions: In human action, intention is very important. When a man performs an action, he does so in order to achieve a set goal. If the intention is evil, the action itself is evil and if the intention is good, the whole action is also good. In human action, there are direct and indirect intentions. While direct intention means the result of the action which the doer desired and expected, that of indirect intention stands for the by-product of the action. The result was not desired by the doer but it is difficult for him to separate the by-product from the desired result. Again, there are immediate as well as remote intentions for human actions. While the immediate intention can be regarded as the first objective which the doer wishes to achieve through his action, the subsequent objective which the doer hopes to achieve after achieving the first objective, every intention has a motive behind it. Morality has therefore given man the freedom of choice to either choose the good or bad moral ways among alternatives. It gives man a sense of determinism and free willingness to do his wants at a particular time. This therefore implies that a moral person does what is right. He does not think to cheat, kill, steal, and smoke or drink intoxicant, commit adultery or fornication for moral person will always be conscious that all these actions are immoral and will try to avoid them. It always gives him/her a sense of consciousness. A morally upright person will always be conscious that all these acts are immoral and will try to avoid them. It always gives him/her a sense of consciousness. A morally upright lady would know that going out of her home at night is not a right act and will try to avoid, likewise a morally upright boy who sees drunkenness as an immoral act and will try to avoid drinking. A morally upright man and woman will not commit adultery but will be faithful to one another as partners.

Moral Judgement: This means a decision taken by a man which will have various effects for the lives of others. The circumstance to be considered vary from

one case to the other, for instance, the Catholics and NKST Churches believe that actions such as adultery, direct abortion, contraceptive pills, premarital sexual, relation amongst others are evil even in their nature and that nothing can make them to be right. However, other scholars say it is improper to pass a judgement on any one's actions without taking into consideration the intention, the circumstance as well as the consequences of the action. Even though some people look at morality subjectively, having to do with the individual's taste and opinion depending on one's feelings, his likes and dislikes.

Moral law: Moral Law is also called natural law or law of God. By the law of God or moral law, it does not mean a law written down and imposed on the people. It has to do with an individual conscience. God can be regarded as the author of moral law being the creator and author all things existing. It is possible for us to know God's law through the examination of our nature. There are also man-made laws put in place by authority. Such laws will still be binding on the individuals. Who are subject to that authority at times, the moral law can be disobeyed. But it is the responsibility of man to be conscious of the natural law in order to be at peace with God since morality leads people to behave in accordance with the wishes of a divine authority.

2.2.2 Sexual Morals

The term sexuality has two common designations; the first refers to the biological aspects of one's personhood. The individual's biological make up based on the appearance of genitals-male or female, that is, who we are. The second refers to the genital behaviour, that is, what we think, feel and do sexually. This includes arousal and activities associated with sexual feelings, fantasies, masturbation, foreplay or intercourse for the purpose of pleasure and reproduction. Sex is biological based towards the generation of new life and also towards pleasure and release of tension.

The goal of sex, according to Flannery, is genital activity culminating in organism (331).

Sexuality on the other hand encompasses both sexes. That is, who we are and what we think, feel and do sexually as well as the meaning given to sex. Flannery sees sexuality as what our body means to us, how we understand ourselves as women or men the way we feel comfortable in expressing affections, these are parts of sexuality (6-8).

Sexuality permeates and affects, to some extent, all our emotions, thought and actions; it involves our affections towards those of the opposite or the same sex. Peschke argues that, "Sexuality must be numbered among the essential determining factors in man that characterise the entire structure of human being whether as a man or woman and affects the behaviour of the individual even in his mental attitude and process" (373).

Sexuality is a sign of our completeness as individuals and means of calling us to interact with other humans, to communicate and commune with them. Sexuality orders a man towards other human beings and since its complete actualisation involves a partner, it necessarily affects the social life of a community. Nobody can arbitrarily use another for the satisfaction of sexual desires. He has to respect the rights of the partner to his body, to the free disposition of him to a treatment worthy of a person, to responsible care and the community has to protect these rights. In addition sexual relations are of greatest concern for every society because they give life to children who are the future of the community. Similarly, the wellbeing and growth of a society depends on the strong rising generation which is bodily and spiritually healthy. This demands that sexual relations be ordered in such a way that a healthy life is guaranteed for the youth (Peschke 374). It is a means by which we

reproduce, bearing new life into the world and transforming ourselves into mothers and fathers.

According to Ehioghae, sexuality has to do with intuitive knowledge and cognition of what manhood and womanhood are made of. Human sexuality understood in this sense, excludes sexual intercourse. The second aspect of human sexuality concerns knowledge of oneself and another person that cannot be surpassed in any other way. The scripture refers to this type of knowledge as “knowing”, which obviously refers to sexual intercourse (Gen 4:1) (183). Sexuality, in a broad sense, could be seen as the human way of being in the world as male or female person, including varied experiences and understanding of sex roles, sexual-affection orientations, perceptions of one’s embodiedness and that of others and capacities for sensuous emotional depth and interpersonal intimacy.

Thiroux views sexuality as the procreation, pleasure, an expression of friendship and living (324). For Igbum, sexuality profoundly enters into our emotional and effective lives and into our understanding of self and others and is always in relationship with God, in the context we realise how human sexuality greatly deepens our interpersonal relationship (4).

Since human beings are not ordinary animals but special beings with emotions, morals and conscience, sexuality is supposed to be rightfully played. Ajiki contends that because some purposes for sex are wrong, not for reasons that are specific to sex but because some motivations are wrong whatever the area of life in which they are pursued. Use of sex to dominate, to debase, to frighten, to bully, to hurt are bad. Use of economic power, social position or physical strength for these purposes is also bad (117).

The African societies in general and the Tiv in particular place sex within the confines of marriage, fornication and adultery are abhorred and adequate punitive measures are meted out to violators. Sexual intercourse which is not the sign and expression of true love, but mere tension reduction or even only exploitation of the other for the sake of bodily pleasures fall short of its authentic meaning, it is a delusion and a lie. It is not strange that man has always experienced sex as something sacred, as something that puts him in front of a mystery; the mystery of life and its propaganda. If sex is understood outside the context of the spiritual nature of man, it ends up inhuman, something lower than what is simply animal. When sex is isolated from spirituality, one sees the other person as a sexual “object” instead of a beloved person. A purely carnal union devoid of the spirit humiliates and reduces persons to the conditions of things that have meaning only for as long as they satisfy or give pleasure in Christian perspective. This is seen as lust; morally it is wrong.

According to Gbenda, sex was considered as sacred. Sex issues were not habitually discussed openly or publicly. The discussions about the subject were held in hallowed tones outside the hearing of the children. It was meant for adults and within the framework of marriage. In this regard, sex serves the purpose of procreation for the continuation of community, pleasure, personal interaction and religion (*An Appraisal of...*125). Torkula discusses the right to human sexuality as he says, in Tiv culture, marriage is noted as an institution through which mankind perpetuates its lineage by procreation. As it is commonly practiced in every society, before marriage, the rights over a woman’s sexuality and procreation capacity are the responsibility of her parents or group. The rights are however transferred to the husband at marriage. Thus, the violation of man’s right of sexual intercourse over his

wife constitutes an offence punishable by the *Akombo* visitation until appropriate propitiation is affected (*The Cultural Institution of marriage...8*).

Pre-marital intercourse has contradicted the very purpose of sex; therefore, it cannot be accepted as meaning and proper, for sexual intercourse is responsible only if it is performed by a couple who are able to secure the healthy condition and education of children. And proper education of a child can be guaranteed only within permanent state of marriage (Peschke 420). Sex is a creative power, but as any other powerful, natural force, it must be rightly channelled, it must be curbed to serve man and not to oppose him, otherwise it may turn to be a source of servitudes, frustrations, disgust, egoism and destruction (Anyam, *Issues in Moral Philosophy... 97*).

Sexual Intercourse outside marriage is morally wrong. The moral concern is the kind of person we should become, the kind of relationship should have and the kind of community, institution and national development we should promote. Sexual relations outside marriage that are done without control lead to death that will eventually affect the community and the entire nation. If the morality of such people has become a point of concern, what standard of morality do they think should be set before them? How can we correct what is wrong about it. Since morality concerns itself with the “ought”, they should not be devoid of human emotions. This is because sometimes morality calls for sensitivity to people as a moral significant creative who sometimes, deserves esteem, compassion, support and we sometimes experience guilt, shame, vulnerability and despair. It involves appreciating those aspects of situation, which are relevant to valuing persons. Since moral behaviour is regulated by customs, traditions interdictions and norms which are community oriented, there are sanctions attached to going contrary to the observance of the moral behaviours. Sexual morals are to be guarded in order to be at peace with the supernatural being who has given us

life, to also be at peace with the ancestor since this will foster equilibrium of the living and the death and disequilibrium. In order to prevent members of the society from endangering the welfare of the entire Tivland, there are operative factors in assessing moral behaviour of our traditional Tiv such as community living, elders, ancestors, *Swem* oath, amongst other. However, all these are not really in force because of westernisation, which calls the present study.

2.3 VIRGINITY AS A MORAL ACT

The issue here is to examine the concept of virginity as to whether it should be considered as a moral act or not. Universally, man is said to be moral being. This assertion is fitting because man is by nature always conscious of right and wrong. Etymologically, the word 'morals' is from a Latin word 'more' meaning customs, conduct, way of life (Omoregbe 39). The moral nature of man has shown that man perceives something to be right in the instance of their being congruent with his nature; and other things are wrong as not being in accord with his nature. Morals deal with human conduct in two dimensions. The first dimension has to do with his personal conduct which is his or her individual life. For instance, he/she would ask him/herself whether it is right or wrong for him to sleep or work in the farm. The second dimension is the social conduct. This dimension has to do with the life of the society at large. That is, conduct of the individual with the group, community or nation.

There is, however, a great emphasis on the social dimension of morals. This is because man by nature is not isolated or individualistic but social or related. He is gregarious and his actions, good or bad, influence others in concrete, definite ways as members of a family or community (Anshi, *Ieren: An Intro...* 37). As such great emphasis on one's relationship with others has precipitated into the evaluation of

morals in order to keep society alive and in total valuable harmony. Without morals, therefore, there will be chaos and suspicion since morals guide people in doing that which is right and avoiding that which is wrong and evil. In summary it helps people to live in harmony.

Virginity is then viewed as a moral act. Take, for instance, in those days if a girl went out of her way to flaunt the maintenance of her virginity before marriage, the parents could feel that they have been given *kunya* (shame). Wegh in his book *Between Continuity and Change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and Modernity* asserts that the immediate community of the girl's parents and the public will on this event admit that the parents were irresponsible. They could even be ridiculed. This is the reason why parents were anxious in giving out their daughters early in marriage (60). Virginity is therefore considered a moral act as it affects the individual, the family and the society at large. It is a concept held and maintained in high esteem and restores mutual trust to the newly married bride on the account of the discovery of her virginity. This is normally extended to the parents-in-law which shows that her family are morally upright in training their daughter and given out in marriage as a virgin.

In his writing, *Nigerian Prostitutions in Italy*, Echekwube asserts that:

Among Nigerian people, virginity at wedding was very much cherished and a high premium value placed on it, that in those days when a girl was being led to the bride's room, she was given a whiter cloth to consummate her marriage. If they got up with a blood stain, it was a sign that the girl was a virgin; the in law receives her with great joy and sent her precious gifts to her parents for their relentless efforts in training a well-matured girl (28).

Dwelling on Echekwube's position, it was morally right to train a girl and give out in marriage as a virgin. 'This position was highly valued among Africans and the Tiv in particular. The Tiv morally emphasise the social conduct or dimension of the individual. That is to say, the action of an individual affects the other or society in concrete terms. This social consciousness is given prominence because of the

association of certain morals with the gods. An example of such moral norms is the virginity norm which is tied in Tiv society to the *Ikyoor* cult and sustained by *Ikyôôr* deity (Atuu 27). Why is virginity not cherished and a high perineum value placed on it, this work has advanced reasons to fill the gap.

2.4 VIRGINITY AND RELIGION

Virginity signifies a condition of no sexual participation or experience, being in a state of its original pure or natural condition that is not changed, touched, spoiled, fresh and not marked. According to Scobie, religion on the other hand is one of the popular institutions that have made recognisable impacts on the political, physical, social, moral, spiritual and economic affairs of the modern world (qtd. in Anyacho 1).

There are many religions in the world but in Nigeria we have three main religions, namely African traditional religion, Islam and Christianity. Judaism is one of the world religions that value virginity.

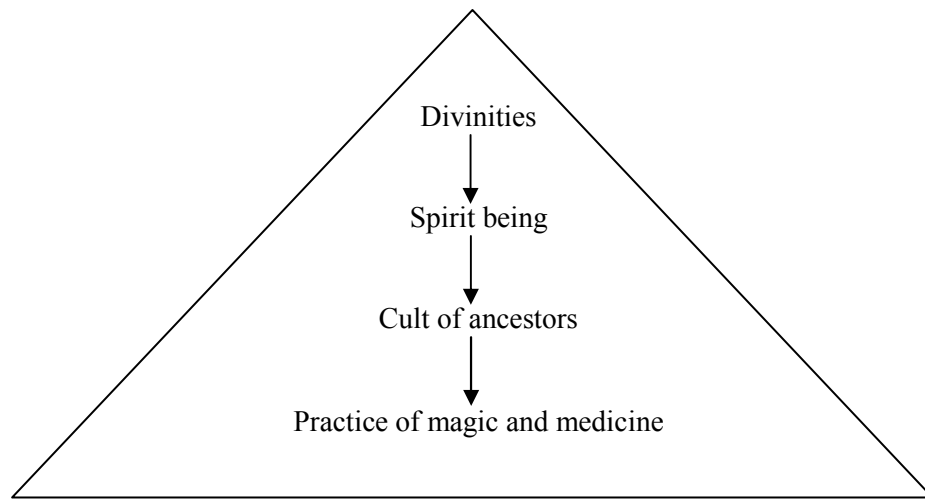
2.4.1 African Traditional Religion

The term or word ‘traditional’, according to the *Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary* is a belief, custom or way of doing something that has existed for a long time among a particular group of people, a set of these beliefs or customs (1584). Thus, African Traditional Religion can be described as the religion that was communicated to the African by their ancestors. In other words, it is an indigenous religion, which evolved from the life and culture of the Africans and has been in transmission from generation to generation. It was not borrowed from any of the world religions. Rather it is a distinct religion with distinct features which evolved gradually through the years from the practices and experiences of the forebears (Anyacho 242).

In agreement with the above Ashiwaju says Africans regard ATR as their authentic religion which has been passed from generation to generation. It therefore forms the basis of the African existence and conditions of behaviour and reaction to external stimuli (9).

The history of the religion is traced to the history of the origin of the African continent. The founders of the religion were no less than the father (of blessed memory) of Africans. In fact, it can be called the original religion and, indeed, the very first religion practiced in the continent before the advent of other religions, especially Christianity and Islam. African Traditional Religion is of a distant past but the academic study of the religion and documentation of some of its beliefs and practices are of recent past. The first writings about the religion were made by the European visitors, some of them were traders, explorers and missionaries who did not understand the reason behind the African's practice of their religion, dressed the religion in derogatory robes, such as paganism, fetishism, magic, animism, savage religion and so on. Such titles were based on their misunderstanding and inaccurate information about the traditional religion of Africans, which largely determined other socio-moral political and economic life of the people (Anyacho 243).

According to Idowu, African Traditional Religion is a world view of the African. He expounds that, this worldview is categorized in areas as such as the Supreme Being (God), the spirit beings, the deities and divinities, ancestral worship, magic and witchcraft, which functions in the life of Africans (10).



Structure of African traditional religion (Anyacho 244)

The categorisation of these beliefs does not mean that the African Traditional Religion is made up of only a series of beliefs. It only helps to understand the major belief systems in the religion, which determined all other practices carried out in it (Anyacho 244).

Belief in God: There is widespread belief in God who is believed to be Supreme and overall Lord. God is essentially a spirit and is recognised as such in all the African tribes. He is invisible and infinite and cannot be comprehended by the finite man this is why the Africans do not use any image to represent him. Thus in the structure of their belief, the Africans do not see the Supreme Being as being of the same rank and file with the divinities and spirits. The African beliefs in God are as old as the African continent. This accounts for different local names of God in all tongues in Africa. The Hausa call him *Ubangiji*, the Tiv *Aondo*, the Idoma *owiocho*, the Igede *Ole*.

Belief in Divinities: In the hierarchy of powers, the divinities stand next to the Supreme Being. They are believed to be God's lieutenants who are given ministerial functions by God. As such "they are ministers of God with derived power". As ministerial deities they occupy significant positions in the life of every African

community. Their major function is mediation between God and man. The Africans believe that they can approach God through the divinities. The divinities can be classified into three major groups, namely, primordial deities, deified ancestors, and personified natural forces.

Beliefs in Spirit Beings: The Africans view the universe as consisting of two major parts; the visible part is inhabited by men while the invisible part is the abode of spiritual beings. The spirits are invisible beings which are capable of assuming different shapes and forms when they want to reveal themselves to man. They are believed to be created by God and as such are subordinate to him. Spirits can be broadly classified into two: nature and human spirits. Each has other sub-groups of spirits, under it.

Nature spirits are personification of some powers and are associated with those natural objects and force of sky, namely, the sun, the moon, stars, rain, storm and wind. These natural objects are closely connected with weather and are believed to influence man through it. The earth spirits on the other hand are associated with things and forces of the earth. They are closely connected with the land, hills, mountains, plants and water. Some stories from people who claim to have encountered them always give the picture that they appear mostly as an old woman, except the mermaid spirit (water spirit) whose dazzling beauty and charm have been generally reported by some fishermen (Anyacho 247).

Belief in Ancestors: Africans believe that death is not the end of life, rather it is a passage to the next life. To them, the soul does not die. After the physical death on earth, the soul, especially the one that died a good death, goes to live in a spiritual world. The ancestors play important roles in the African belief. They are guardians of morality, traditions, ethics and are superintendent of family affairs. They are givers of

knowledge of medicine. The ancestors constitute invisible judiciary for the living. They also play reincarnatory roles. For instance, the Yoruba call a girl who is an incarnate of the grandmother *Iyabo*, which is the same thing as the Igbo *Nnenna* and the Tiv is *Ngohide*. The above shows the setting of the African Traditional Religion as old as African himself.

African traditional religion is as old as Africa herself. It is a religion handed down from generations to generations by the fore fathers. It does not possess sacred scriptures, it is thus written in memory and we live and transmit orally as the occasion demands. Commenting on this Dopamu says:

African religion encompasses all aspects of life. Africans do not know to live without religion. They celebrate life religiously and they never embark on anything without bringing in religion. Thus at birth, marriage, death, warfare, healing, the foundation of every project, planting, harvesting, enthronement of chiefs and kings and other areas of human endeavour, African religion plays important roles (qtd. in Alamu 82).

In African religion, truthfulness, chastity and justice are cherished and to ensure that the cherished ethical norms meet their desired objectives. There are taboos, prohibitions and laws that guide members of the society. Violation of such always has consequences from the God, spirits. Preservation of the virginity of a girl is another crucial moral value in African religion. An example of such norm in the Tiv society is tying of virginity to the *Ikyôôr* cult and sustaining by the *Ikyôôr* deity (Atuu 27).

According to Ifesieh, there is an initiation of girls into woman hood among the Efik in Cross River state of Nigeria:

When the clitoris is cut, the fallen piece is dried and inserted into a dried fish and given to her future husband. And any husband who has excised part of the clitoris of his virgin wife would always love her and their marriage would last as long as they live (198).

The above shows that any woman who goes contrary by allowing another man to have sex with her after the future husband has taken her clitoris will face the consequences

either by death or by not bearing children unless she will confess and appease the gods. Virginity is therefore considered as a crucial moral value in African traditional religion.

2.4.2 Christianity

This is a religion that is said to be an offshoot of Judaism. Christianity is a religion after the teaching of its leader, Jesus Christ. This religion is based on what Jesus said, and the followers are called Christians. The name Christianity was given to the believers in Christ at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 11:26). Okafor is of the view that Christianity came to Nigeria and West Africa generally in the 15th Century through the efforts of the missionaries (the Portuguese Catholics) (25-26).

According to Odey, Christianity is a faith seeking religion. It started at the birth of Christ the saviour and began its growth as a movement in Judaism. Fundamentally, it is based on the being and teaching of Jesus Christ the son of God. Its adherents are known as Christians, however writers prefer using the word church when the concept of Christianity comes into play. To them the church is the people of God and not only a place of worship (qtd in Afa 46).

Beverluis is of the view that the origin of Christianity begins in the heart of God. The Divine nature of love; love is not something that comes from God, love is God and God is Love. If a Christian were to name the divine in English, the best term would be simply God-love. (18) Christianity is a religion that was founded by Jesus Christ. The name "Jesus" means "Saviour" while the word "Christ" means the "Anointed One" that is, somebody specially consecrated by God and destined for a special function; anoint means consecrate. Thus the name Jesus Christ means "the saviour, the anointed one" (Omogbe 16).

Christianity takes its name from belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ or Messiah. The religion began as a movement within Judaism, Jesus himself was a Jew, as were all his first followers. The disciples or adherents of Jesus were called Christians. Christianity has through the work of Jesus Christ, and that of his disciples, grown and become a universal witness to the extent that it is now rated as having the largest adherents among the world religions. Before Jesus was arrested, he had a group of followers (disciples) from which he selected and commissioned the twelve as apostles. As the number of the disciples increased and as Christianity began to spread outside the land of Palestine, there arose problems of heresies in the church.

All these made Christianity become a formalised religion. Being strengthened by the problems that it faced, Christianity was able to reach almost all the continents of the world and has come to be identified as the world's most accepted religion. Today Christianity exhibits three main verities, Roman Catholic, Protestants and Eastern Orthodox (Anyacho 183).

The fragmented parts of Christianity always make it difficult for one to discuss its basic doctrines and practices. Being one of the religions that have recorded many sectarian differences, Christianity is seriously facing some challenges and attacks from some of its sects, which have started questioning some established Christian doctrines. However, doctrines, which are still accepted by majority of the Christian denomination are contained in the apostles creed and could be summarised as follows.

Belief in God: Christians believe that there is one God who is the ruler, the governor and the controller of the whole universe. He is the creator of the whole created order. They believe that God created man in his own image in order for man to do "His will". The belief in God the father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, is a belief which the Christians hold to show the belief in the all-powerful

nature reasoning... they strongly believe in the universal fatherhood of God who made man the crown of all his creation (Anyacho 184).

Belief in Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ is the centre of Christianity. The belief in him has remained the major area of differences between Christianity and other world religions. Christianity believes strongly that Jesus is the son of God and their Lord and saviour. One of the strongest statements in the Apostles' Creed is the belief in Jesus Christ the only begotten son of God who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. They believe that it was for the salvation of mankind that Jesus came down from heaven after taking the human form and born in the human way (Anyacho185).

Belief in the Holy Spirit: Christians do not hide their intense belief in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is an invisible being, which appears as a true creative element in the life of church. It is the same spirit that poured on the disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8) in order to endure the church with power and boldness to fulfil the prophecy in (Joel 2:28) and to fulfil the promise of the father which Jesus asked the disciples to wait for (Acts 14); they believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. Christians therefore believe that the Holy Spirit has a significant role to play in their mission of the world.

Christian Ethics: Christian ethics is based on three pillars, namely, the laws of Moses (the Decalogue), the teachings of Jesus Christ (the gospel) and the letters of Paul (the epistles). The Law of Moses, which was summarised in the Ten Commandments, was one of the things Christianity inherited from Judaism. The early Christians accepted the Law of Moses as a character which helps to guide their relationship with God and fellow men. Jesus Christ acknowledged this Old Testament Law and also maintained that the Law and the prophets hang in the commandment.

This teaching contained in the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5-7), made a radical departure from easier standards of conventional morality. He brought in ethics based on humility, forgiveness, love, blessedness of righteous living which entails living right with your neighbours, truthfulness, fidelity, accepts people as brother’s keeper abstinence and chastity, St. John in the Apocalypse speaks of those who have preserved their virginity as the special associates of the lamb of God. These follow the lamb wherever he goes, there were purchased from among men, the fruit to God and the lamb (Rev 14:4). Again St. Paul speaking in 1Corinthians 7:8-9 says, to the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

The above clearly shows that Christians are encouraged to remain pure and the issue of holiness is important in a Christian life; immoral life is capable of sending one into hell fire, so as a Christian the unmarried should remain as virgins and the married should avoid extra-marital affairs. The teaching of St. Paul contributed immensely to Christian ethics. It expounded some of the teachings of Christ. He went into details in many areas of the Christian life. On the whole, Christian ethics emphasise love and moral living for mankind.

2.5 MARRIAGE AND VIRGINITY

Scholars over the years have looked at marriage as a socially approved union between two individuals, one of whom must be of opposite sex. There are essential requirements for the celebration of valid marriage in most societies of the world; the details of such requirement vary from one society to another. Marriage according to Goodenough:

A transaction and resulting contact in which a person (male or female, corporate or individual, in person or by proxy) establishes a continuing claim

to the right of sexual access to a woman-this right having priority over rights of sexual access others currently have or may subsequently acquire in relation to her (except in a similar transaction) until the contract resulting from the transaction is terminated and in which the woman involved is eligible to bear children (12-13).

Goodenough embarks on an all embracing definition of marriage in the attempt to ensure that no matter what race or culture in a society, there must always be some institutions which the anthropologist could feel justified in labeling as marriage.

Gbenda sees marriage as an institution in which there is a union of one man with one or more wives and not the woman having two or more husbands at the same time (*Contemporary and Continuity...* 205). Marriage among the Tiv for Dzugba is considered as a symbol of adulthood and maturity for both the man and the woman (*On the Tiv of Central...*107).

Torkula considers marriage as giving either of the spouses a monopoly in the sexuality of the other, right of labour, establishes a socially significant relationship of affinity between them and their relations establishes the legality of father or mother over the children born while in the marriage relationship (*The Cultural Institution...*44). This shows that sex constitutes an essential determination of marriage relationship. Thus the Africans and the Tiv in particular value virginity in marriage. The violation of its value in marriage tends to affect not only the individual but their families, neighbours as well as the community in which they belong.

Sharing in the same view Lawrence Wrightman, in his research work titled, *Sexual Behaviour in Relationship* written in social psychology, explained that, the issue of whether the man was a virgin prior to the existing relationship had no noticeable effect on the couple's feelings of commitment, but the woman's sexual states prior to the existing relationship did affect the couple's commitment. Couples in which the woman had been virgin prior to the existing relationship reported more

closeness and greater satisfaction in the relationship than did woman who had experienced intercourse prior to the existing relationship (98).

Though Lawrence had a remarkable contribution, he failed to give us convincing reasons why the issue of whether the man was a virgin prior to the existing relationship has no noticeable effect on the couples feelings of commitment. The study made efforts towards this explanation to close the gap.

In another contribution, Bohanan in his book *Beauty and Scarification amongst the Tiv* shows that in Africa as in Europe, there are many different views regarding exactly what makes a woman lovable: "Some men desire virginity while others do not seek this quality" (56). From Bohanan's explanation, there are so many qualities (apart from virginity) that could make a woman desirable in the eyes of a man: thus while some men might place a premium on virginity, others might emphasize other qualities. He has, however, failed to note that in Tiv traditional society, there is a higher emphasis on virginity as a pre-condition to marriage. We therefore dug into the reasons why the Tiv place so much emphasis on the virtue of virginity.

Gbor, in his writing on *The Concept of Culture and Tiv Cultural Value* asserts that, it is against the ethics of the Tiv for men to befriend and have sex with girls instead of marrying them. To have sex with a girl is to spoil and frustrate the efforts and hopes of her parents (21). He has expressed the need for the young unmarried girls to marry and be appreciated as house wives.

Gbor has failed to explain to us how these young girls will be guided and supported to achieve this aim, we gave the details on how the young unmarried girl will be guided and supported.

2.6 MARRIAGE, CELIBACY AND VIRGINITY (CHASTITY)

Marriage is central to mankind that whenever it is contracted, it is welcomed with a lot of fanfare and ceremonies, especially in African societies. The divine nature of marriage is captured in Genesis 2:18, 24 “it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him a helper fit for him... for this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they will become one flesh”.

The Judeo-Christian tradition of marriage sees God behind institutionalising the union when it is said in His creation account of Adam and Eve as the first couples on earth. The Christian Bible quotes thus of God as the brain behind marriage:

Let us make man in our image after our likeness... and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth... so God created man in His own image, He create male and female. And God blessed them and said be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26-28).

In other words, the man and woman (male and female) are urged to join together as husband and wife as part of the grand design by God. Almost all cultures and religion of the world recognise and place emphasis on marriage as an important aspect of human existence. Procreation, companionship, and fidelity seem to be the basic primary objectives of marriage as seen by God in His original creation design held by the Judeo-Christian tradition.

According to Seer, marriage is a universal phenomenon contracted in different forms depending on the people and their cultural milieu (45). He considers marriage as a God given life, long affair created to ensure appropriate condition for the promotion of life.

Many scholars have attempted to define celibacy in various ways, following their dispositions. Komonchak defines celibacy as the religious practice of non-marriage or the choice commitment to the single life for specifically religious reasons

(173). He traces the etymology of the word celibate as a derivation from the Latin *Caelebs* meaning single or alone. He explains further that one may choose to be single for reasons other than religious, however, for him, celibacy is single life only for religious reasons. In other words, only religious motivation qualifies celibacy. Marriage, he says, can be celibate by analogy if the couple chooses to abstain from genital sexual activity for religious reasons (174). Komonchak's definition shows that celibacy is not only a state of being unmarried, but a state of chastity irrespective of marriage or not.

Pazhayampallil holds that the best definition ever of celibacy is that of Aquinas, who refers to celibacy as "emptiness for God". To be celibate means to be empty for God, to be free and open for His presence, to be available for His service (611). Growth in the life of a celibate means growing in the capacity to love other without seeking exclusivity of marriage. The mature and prayerful celibate is one whose emptiness is filled up with the love of God and God's people. According to Pazhayampallil's view:

Celibacy of the priests binds them by force of the virtue of religion not only to the renunciation of marriage, but also the exclusion of any act whatsoever contrary to chastity. This is the traditional understanding supported by the church of the promise to be a celibate (612).

The strength of this definition is that whether one is married or not, he or she is required to remain chaste to the glory and service of God. In marriage, chastity is required and as a celibate, chastity is also required. Celibacy therefore requires that one remains a virgin to the service of the God just as spinsters who are demanded to be virgins until marriage.

Aschenbrenner defines celibacy flowing from its point of misconception, the erroneous fact that, to many celibacy of the priest is a matter of not having a wife. For

him, this understanding is only partially true; there is the necessity for a more precise definition. This he submits thus:

Celibacy is the foregoing of all genital sexual expression in the basic four fold sexual relationship we all have: with members of the opposite sex, with members of the same sex, with ourselves and with God. Even more and precisely, celibacy also entails the forgoing of romantic behaviour, since such behaviour gradually becomes more and more seriously oriented to the commitment of marriage. A celibate will not relate to anyone in a way that expresses the seriousness of the romantic (112).

For Aschenbrenner, celibacy entails not only a rejection of the life of marriage or of sexual intercourse in the life of a clergy, but it involves also a total spousal commitment in matrimony. Celibacy is not necessarily clerical; one does not need to be a clergy to be celibate.

For Oredikpe, celibacy and marriage are mutually exclusive; they need not to be opposite and divisive. Their intrinsic relation to one another is understood and lived in different perspectives. They are both divine vocations, each chosen according to God's plan. They are mutually interdependent. He says thus:

Matrimony could be fully appreciated only with celibate support, and celibacy could be fully understood only with the support of sacramental couples. The celibacy of the Priest would have no sense at all if it were not complemented by the sacrament of marriage. It is basically from family life that vocation to the priesthood arises. Both vocations are a call to love, celibacy is a chaste dedication of service to Jesus Christ and the people of His Church, marriage is a pure and selfless dedication to one's spouse, being one in union with them spiritually, intellectually and physically, all of which is expressed in assisting God in His work of creation (68).

In support of the above quotation, John Paul II quoted in Kwen says: "...if anyone chooses marriage, he must choose it just as it was instituted by the creator from the beginning. He must seek in it, those values that correspond to God's plan. If on the other hand anyone decides to pursue continence for the kingdom of heaven, he must seek in it such values proper to such a vocation. In other words, one must act in conformity with his chosen vocation" (3).

From the above definitions it can be inferred that celibacy, a practice of non-marriage is possible only for religious reasons. Any reason other than religious, as these scholars have tried to establish, disqualifies celibacy. This study contends that these definitions falls short of perfection, for celibacy may be practiced by moral people who are not religious. This in fact is celibacy. It may be practiced more for religious reasons; it can also be practiced for personal reasons such as self contentment, the fear of responsibility to opposite sex. To reduce celibacy to a practice only for religious reasons is somewhat misleading and inadequate.

Whether single, married or celibate, the most important aspect is chastity, the unmarried should remain virgins, the married should be chaste and the celibates should remain chaste as virgins. Among scholars who have attempted to supply an understanding in the relationship between celibacy and chastity is Kiesling. He made a distinction between the secular unmarried state and the celibate unmarried state. For Kiesling, celibacy is not just the state endeavour to forgo all directly wilful indulgence in the pleasures of genital sex, whether with others or alone, on the other hand, a single or unmarried person is an unmarried person who is open to marriage. Bachelors and spinsters are people who never found the right partners, or who had to let them pass by because circumstances prevented marriage. The celibate on the other hand is unmarried and intends to remain so. This intention is usually expressed in a promise or vow to God to be absolutely chaste. This vow of celibacy is a virtuous one and possible to practice. The unmarried person who is not celibate must also be chaste. For the celibate, unmarried and married chastity is essentially compulsory (17).

It is no news to hear of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual immorality concerning priests. Promiscuity appears to be a predominant sin in the world. There are publications in the media about rape, homosexuality, abortion,

sexual abuse, etc (qtd. in Kwen 3). Even though such activities appear to be more prevalent in the Western society due to high level of intellectual and technological development which have made people free-minded and non-hesitant to report such cases, the situation is not different in Africa, Nigeria and the Tiv in particular. The priests are not the worst culprits in cases of sexual abuse; they cannot be completely washed of guilt in many aspects.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) conscious of the gradual decline in sexual morality among priests and foreseeing a situation where this may eventually degenerate, published guidelines on priestly celibacy entitled "Called to Love: Ethical Standards for Clergy and Seminarians in Nigeria". In this document the Bishops observed:

The fact is that not all of our ministers of the Gospel have been faithful to gospel values. Some have been and are still living lives that either overtly or covertly contradict their commitment to chastity and celibacy. They have used and abused their pastoral situations for purposes of greed or sexual favours. In places come to light, our people are rightly scandalised. They feel betrayed and let down, hurt and confused. In some instances, that faith in God has been wounded (8).

Premised on this background and resolute on curbing the immoral acts so far prevalent among priests in some parts of the country, the Bishops recommend that violators of the rule of celibacy be treated as individuals. They should be made to pay diligently for misbehaviours depending upon the nature of the allegation, and the status of the law, certain allegations of sexual abuse may be turned over to proper civil authorities (Catholic Bishops' Conference 20).

Concerning the above, Archbishop Milingo says:

Celibacy, once a vital part of the church's spiritual became a façade. Secret affairs and marriages, illegitimate children, rampant homosexuality, pedophilia and illicit sex have riddled the priesthood to have extent that the United Nation Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) has investigated the church for sexual abuse, and the Western media is filled with stories of lawsuits and scandals surrounding the church (qtd. in Yakubu 4).

Ripley equally states it aptly:

No one is forced to be a priest, and the young man who is called to the priesthood knows quite well that he must free by bind himself to the obligation of celibacy. To do so is one of his greatest joys. He knows that God will bless his work in return for such a great sacrifice. He knows that he will be free to do his priestly work for God unencumbered by having to provide and care for a wife and family. He knows too that God gives his grace to his priests in a special way to keep them chaste...those who say priestly chastity is impossible utters a wicked libel, not only against the catholic priesthood, but against all moral unmarried people living in the world (310).

Sigmund Freud declares that “the strongest instinct in the human being is sexual instinct” (141). By this he meant that the whole of human life is characterised by sexual activities. The greater percentage of what man does is pushed by sexual drives. Whether his theory is plausible or not, still as human, the ability to control one-self makes one responsible to the society and his immediate environment. But looking at the trend of activities in the society today as Kwen rightly pointed out. One will not be far from the truth to conclude that “promiscuity appears to be a predominant sin in the world. It is no news to have publications in the media about rape, homosexuality, abortion, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and other forms of sexual immorality (3). This work is not an attack on the church’s practice of celibacy but a scholarly evaluation of the practice of celibacy and other religious leaders. He makes an exposition of the merits and demerits as it affects our traditional values with a view of postulating operational standards on which this esteemed practice will be improved, since the people know that a priest is the symbol of chastity and purity but some priests are not living up to it. Ripley contends that our Lord Jesus Christ praises most highly the state of virginity thus: “if the case of a man and his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry” (Matt. 19:10) (30). Like St Paul says, the vow of celibacy cannot be taken by everybody but only by those who have the gift.

For there were eunuchs who were made so from their mother’s womb, and there were eunuchs who were made so by men, and there are eunuch who have

made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take let him take (Matt. 19:12).

Ripley interprets this teaching of Jesus that the prohibition of divorce is a divine percept binding all Christians, but the practice of celibacy is a divine counsel for a few, those who can. He drew his analogy from the example of some of the early church leaders. St Paul, for instance, led a life of celibacy and recommended it to all who felt called to that life. In his words “for I would that all men were even as me, but everyone hath his power gift from God, one after this manner and another, after that. But I say to the unmarried and to the widows it is good for them. If they so continue, even as I” (1 Cor 7:7-8) (308).

Apart from the example of St Paul, Ripley quotes also St. John who in the Apocalypse speaks of those who have preserved their virginity as the special associates of the Lamb of God. “These follow the lamb wherever he goes. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the lamb” (14:4) (309).

Ripley traces celibacy to the time of the early church fathers. Though then it was not a rule, it was practiced by those who wished to dedicate themselves to God. Just as it is today, living a celibate life for the purpose of uniting more intimately to God; does it still work that way? The history of the reformation shows that among the practices Martin Luther frowned at, which led to his reformation of October 31, 1517, was the practice of celibacy (Green 58).

Celibacy entails that total denial of sexual intercourse but some priests still involve themselves into the act. This is supposed to be one of the Christian denominations that was introduced by the missionaries that also opposed traditional religion with its values. If celibates that are expected to be chaste turn out to be involved in sexual intercourse, what then will become of their followers; and if the aim of total chastity is defeated then its members are also vulnerable. This is also one

of the areas that Christianity and western civilisation have done harm. Chastity was highly respected in the traditional setting until the introduction of Christianity and western civilisation that the practice of chastity within and outside marriage was affected. People who embraced Christianity have abandoned traditional setting with its values and things have fallen apart.

2.7 THE VALUE OF THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINITY IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

The preservation of virginity was a crucial moral value among the Tiv of central Nigeria. But today, it appears the practice is taking a down turn. Through a brief scan of literary works on the subject, the preservation of virginity is seen by tribal communities in different ways across the globe given their varied social cultural background. In the society we live today, friends, families, relatives, etc. play their part in making up a person's mind about virginity. Some people argue that the preservation of virginity has nothing to offer to the society, but this study argues that it has something to offer to the society and as such we have a responsibility to save our children from the ills of moral decay. It is the responsibility of parents to let their children see, preserve and value their virginity (sexuality) as well as embrace sexual chastity in all its forms.

The purpose of this section is to examine the value given to the preservation of virginity in other parts of the world. There are several reasons why many societies value and encourage the preservation of virginity in unmarried woman or girls. The reasons range from men dominant nature, family values, to religion and to some monetary or property gain.

In most societies, women have always been dominated by men. Men feel more secure to have a virgin bride. It is a source of pride and satisfaction for a man to know

that no one else has touched his bride or wife except him. This feeling has driven many societies' ideology about the importance of preserving virginity among girls; apart from that, virginity is seen as a symbol of purity, self control and decency (Jumee. *The Value of Virginity*...web).

Another reason why virginity was so valued by some societies is because of the stigma attached to having a bastard child. Most families expect their young girls to remain virgins because if they are impregnated before marriage, it becomes the problem of the family to bear the shame of having a bastard born in their family. In addition to that, in many societies, it is just a moral issue; sex is accepted only after marriage (Abramson 25).

Another important reason why virginity was valued in our history is because marriage used to be a source of gain, either as a dowry or as a contract that benefits the girls' family. In some Asian countries, virginity is important because families want to use their daughters as a source of upward mobility in the society to higher positions, to gain favour of an important family or to keep their high class status or assets. Such people arrange marriages to suit their needs.

In Western countries today, virginity is less valued; in fact, it is abnormal for a girl to still remain a virgin until her wedding day. If a girl is still a virgin at twenty five, she is often ridiculed, whereas in traditional middle Asian societies, virginity is still a big deal. Men want their brides to be virgins and their women to be covered modestly. In Africa, some societies still highly appreciate a virgin bride. Historically, in most African cultures, a bride is supposed to be a virgin, but that ideology is changing drastically. In Abraham's survey of ten Nigerian men (20 to 25 years old), when asked if they prefer to marry a virgin, only two out of ten men from Nigeria answered Yes! Two of them said they will appreciate it, but would not care if their

brides are not virgins while the rest of them dismissed the idea that virginity is important for marital satisfaction (Abramson 27).

Muchetu reports that, in South Africa, the issues of rape, violence, diseases and the incidence of families losing their composure... have influenced many families to turn to Zulu traditional practices to protect their children from a morally and sexually depraved society. They long for the pleasure of marrying girls that have not been deflowered. The hymen and foreskin are being examined for defects. A rather peculiar examination took place at the Qophumlando high school, alongside many other schools, in the North East of South Africa. For the students, it was undoubtedly the most important examination of the year. Teenagers numbering up to 1500 were lined up to take a virginity test. Besides examining the hymen and foreskin for defects, this purely Zulu ceremony also demands a cow sacrifice and homage to the Zulu monarchy. The girls were made to line up, ordered to lower their underwear and slowly lie prostrate on the ground. Thabile Ngobo, one of their teachers, then examines their virginity to see if their hymens are intact. Meanwhile, inside one of the classrooms, Mr. Malinga, the school director and also a physic teacher, tests purity of boys. The director examines the knees of his pupils. According to him, “the knees are apparently a good indicator of purity” “a tight foreskin is a sign of virginity”, while many proud boys and girls sign up to take part in these examinations, some refrain from them because of fear or timidity. But refusing to take part in this process does not come without finger pointing as they are immediately accused of immorality (*Has Virginity Lost its Value?* Web).

According to a very serious looking Raymond Malakoana “Taking the test repels demons. It serves as a protection against AIDS and other diseases. It also protects one from crime, drugs and untrustworthy friends”. The 20 year old, boasts

about the fact that he just passed the test. It has made his parents very happy. But the 30 students who failed the test face school rejection. Parents attach a lot of importance to the ceremony, “they came back from work exhausted, they do not know what happens in their absence, they do not know if their children have been abused or subjected to sexual practices” said Mr. Malinga on their behalf. This strange and unscientific method is doubtful, to the culture it is reassuring. It is hoped that adolescent virgins, one day, may marry among themselves. Many, however, wish that their virgin children never get married (*Virginity: The Hymen and Foreskin Under Lock and Key* Web).

Although there are several arguments on the premium of preserving virginity today, it is still very important with the following reasons. According to Davis, “The sexual revolution that swept the country (America) during the 1960s is now beginning to encounter problems; liberation has brought in new epidemics of sexually transmitted diseases (qtd. in Efe 187). Davis noted that it has been estimated, for example, that as many as 20 million Americans now suffer from recurrent genital herpes for which no cure has been found. A striking relationship has been drawn between cervical cancer and promiscuous intercourse; the younger the woman is at the first intercourse the more frequently she engages in it and the greater the number of partners, the higher the risk of contracting cervical cancer. The search infers that these reports reflect the reality in Nigeria and the Tiv in particular where premarital sex and promiscuity seem to be the norm for many young people. Other sexually transmitted diseases that may be contracted through premarital sex include gonorrhea and syphilis. A young lady can transmit the infection to the unborn baby when she gets pregnant. Nancy van Pelt observes that these diseases spread from person to person almost exclusively through sexual intercourse and it often takes just one

infected person to spread it to many others (135). The above discussion shows that virginity is still very important to the Tiv.

This scenario is equally true for the much-dreaded HIV/AIDS. The epidemic continues to evolve and has now reached pandemic proportions in Nigeria in general and the Tiv society in particular and other developing countries throughout the world. HIV/AIDS present a challenge to the well-being of individuals and to the public health of proportion unprecedented in modern history. While the challenge is scientific and medical, it is also psychological, economic, social and ethical. Even though there are other means of contracting HIV/AIDS the easiest way is through sexual intercourse. The global emergency and one of the most formidable undermines social and economic development throughout the world and affects all levels of society-national, community, family and individual (Pillay 108). This is the disaster facing all of humanity and particularly the Africans and the Tiv, which is not only the most affected but also the least prepared and able to deal with the effect the families and communities. Dealing with the impact and challenges of HIV/AIDS on medical and social levels proves to be a daunting task if not near impossible task particularly in Tiv rural areas. This is the main reason why abstinence could be the best option even though not only through sexual intercourse that HIV/AIDS is contracted, but it is believed that sexual intercourse is the easiest way through which HIV/AIDS could be contracted.

It is clear that HIV/AIDS can be considered a disaster but responding to a disaster effectively would require preventive measures involving various disciplines. Curran who cited three contributory factors says theology played an important part in settling the theological scene for the development of an ethic of responsibility by viewing humankind primarily as beings that listen to and respond to the word of God.

His second factor is the way in which theology today preserves man in terms of his life in the world, and that man is called to cooperate in transforming himself, his destiny and his world. A third factor which influences the primacy of a model of responsibility is derived from an eschatology that gives more importance to human kind existence in this world and sees it in greater continuity with the next world (111). The work tends to interpret responsibility simply as care, as caring for someone; parents, teachers and politicians, interestingly enough, are the central examples of responsibility; of course responsibility includes but it means more than that. It is not simply care but prospective care. Not the instinct of care, but the specifically human capability to anticipate the future constitutes responsible for not only the care that is evoked in me by the presence of the other, but the prospective care for the future of a shared realm of living together defines responsibility. What is basic for human responsibility is the capacity to anticipate real possibilities in the future and to make a choice among them.

The suggestion is to consider what future impact our present action may have not only on our lives, but also on the lives of others. Looking out for or considering the other does not imply that one relinquishes power responsibility to gain power over one's power.

Over the centuries humans have prided themselves in having power to negotiate and find solutions to problems in their lives and the world. The quest to control economies, territories, individuals, groups and nations has proved successful for some but with grave consequences of disempowerment, alienation and vulnerability for others. Now humanity is faced with the realities of HIV/AIDS for which there is no cure or effective vaccine despite relentless efforts in biomedical

research. HIV/AIDS has been described as a behavioural disease and is perpetuated by social behavioural factors.

This research argues that the power to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and STDs hinges strongly on making responsible decisions and choices, primarily, but not simply, every individual is challenged to make responsible choices about his or her sexual relationships. The work contends that in some cultures women are not at liberty to negotiate sexual practices and for many women the notion of choice is a luxury they cannot afford. However, an adequate STDs pandemic requires the involvement of every person and every organization, the government, medical and legal fraternities, pharmaceutical companies businesses, communities, faith communities, families and individuals. It requires comprehensive, collaborative efforts rooted in the collective and anticipatory principles operative in an ethic of responsibility.

The involvement of every person and every organisation, the government, medical and legal fraternities, businesses, communities, faith, communities, families and individuals, requires a comprehensive, collaborative effort rooted in the collective and anticipatory principles operative in an ethic of responsibility. The emphasis should be on helping people develop a sense of collective responsibility for dealing with the moral issues like the case of pre-marital sex, HIV/AIDS and STDs as well as inculcating the conviction that something can be done about this life threatening diseases and behaviours. It is believed that Christians have both the conviction of life and a spirit of community to embody a vision and the will to respond in a way that will enable us to move from a situation of hopelessness and despair to hope and joyful living.

For too long the church has been prompted by forces from outside to act or react. For too long it has depended on guidance from secular society. We must take ownership and reclaim the Christian resources of love, mercy, grace, forgiveness, care, compassion, and of community of hope of life. There is not a hint in the Gospel that Jesus relied on external control for moral or personal integrity. He found the locus of good and of evil within the human heart and he thrust awesome freedom and responsibility upon his followers. The challenge for the church is to ensure that the ethical position of its leadership does not remain broad public statements and official policy documents, but that church policy is implemented in such a way that may shape the thoughts and live of its members.

The church is in a unique situation to use the Christian symbol of community as revealed in the trinity to bring about a newness of mind regarding relationships among its followers. It has become crucial for the church to reclaim its potential courses of moral formation rooted in script tune, history and life-experiences of followers past and present. The Bible has the potentials to influence the ethos of Christian communities in Tivland because once texts penetrate deeply into the psyche, especially the collective psyche they cease to be primarily objects of study and rather coin to supply the conceptual and imaginative vocabularies as well as the grammar and syntax with which we construe and construct reality. Thus the Bible influences the moral world because it shapes the way people see their world and how they speak about their world.

Christians can reach reasonable judgement and decisions in many cases of ethical conduct by development traditions of responsible biblical interpretation that manifests itself in liturgy and worship.

Unique opportunities to help look in the right direction, the task to see, describe and respond to the world rightly is at the heart of the process of transformation in moral decisions and actions. The power to stop pre-marital and extra-marital affairs in their destructive tracks is the responsibility of every member of the community within the body of Christ. However, this process can only start if we allow ourselves to see that our choices and actions reflect who we are, and that coming together in community during worship, gives us the opportunity to negotiate who we ought to be. The study also argues that an adequate responsible response to pre-marital and extra-marital affairs would require the church to adopt a reactive approach as well as a proactive approach. Pre-marital sex does not present the church with new challenges but it challenges us to recover things that we have neglected or lost.

Pornography and Dress Code: It is generally agreed that the word pornography applies to certain pictures, publications or films that show nudity or sexual activity in a way that violates standards of propriety. The purpose is to excite people in some ways, but experts disagree as to the long range effects of this stimulation upon the individual and the society. Basically, hard-core pornography offers visual satisfaction. The personality types who involve themselves in this often are the victims of sexual inadequacy. It fills the emptiness, the loneliness, etc; it also provides the necessary stimulus to carry them through another day (Igbum 12).

Another angle is dress code and conduct. Indecent dressing can be said to be an improper, unacceptable and unsatisfactory way of dressing in such a way that is provocative or in a way it entice feelings among people of opposite sex (Pinga 27). The idea of clothing oneself can be traced to our first parents Adam and Eve whom the Lord God clothed with skin of animals, with the sole aim of covering their

nakedness. The first man and woman later procured fig leaves to cover their nakedness when they realised that they were naked after yielding to the devil's temptation by eating the forbidden fruit contrary to God's instruction. But God in His infinite mercy decided on a better alternative by providing them with animal skin instead of leaves (RSV, Gen 3). A girl who is a virgin will be conscious of her body and will not expose vital parts of the body which are originally meant to be covered.

According to Otite, the way children are brought up in any society reflects the kinds of beliefs and values parents hold (qtd. in Okim 26). Africa in general and Ofutop in particular expect their female children to remain virgins until marriage. Hence the girl of unquestionable chastity is greatly respected by the community and cherished by her suitor. This was also common among the Tiv of Central Nigeria where mothers' pride was to give their daughters into marriage as virgins.

Chief Ekok, Okpurwu, His Royal Highness Ntun Nkwam Anyam and Ntun Emanghe Obora in oral interview say: "Certain laws for good moral behaviour were instituted across Ofutop. They included chastity, female virginity, adultery and stealing which were regarded as abominable and sacrilegious" (qtd. in Okim 26).

The people believed that in the area of virginity, the practice enabled women to enter into institution of marriage in a pure bodily and inner condition. The process would also lead to a blessed marriage life. Considering the importance of this belief in Ofutop, Udoh says "it is a cultural heritage to nature and develops an acceptable ethical code of upbringing of the young women as the seedlings of marriage and motherhood" (qtd in Okim 29). Since the pre-colonial times, Ofutop society had this practice as a major function exclusively for women to regulate the behaviours of the young women so as to ensure discipline and good conduct.

In Ofutop traditional society, virginity like many other practices performed important social and religious functions that helped in promoting, maintaining, encouraging and motivating compliance to the taboos, norms and ethical standards hence the tradition frowns at any young woman who failed the virginity test. If any young woman fails the test, such as woman or young girl often times was stripped naked or smeared with charcoal and paraded through the main street of the village and led to the village square to face public shame and at times expelled from her age grade and exiled from the village for life or ridiculed in songs or given to compulsory service of free labour to the chief (Okim 31). Virginity test in Ofutop was symbolic and colourful event, a celebration of victory over disgrace and shame. The successful virgins were paraded around the village. The celebration took the form of suitor's dance and general merriment. This celebration promoted communal living among their people in the traditional days. However, some elders regretted that this tradition has been affected by modernism.

The literature reviewed above opens a vista to a better understanding of how various scholars have treated the issue under discourse. It makes an appraisal of these views; and so it becomes easier for the present study to bridge the perceived gaps in the views.

CHAPTER THREE

TIV TRADITIONAL THOUGHT SYSTEM ON VIRGINITY AND PRE-MARITAL SEX

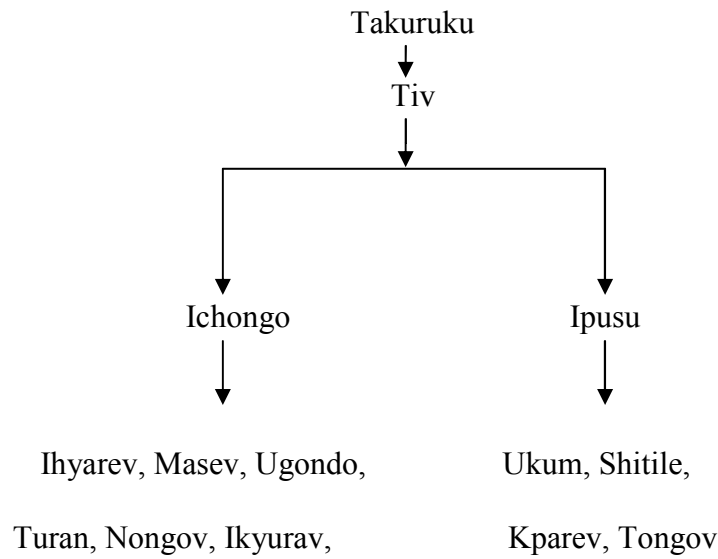
3.1 THE TIV OF BENUE STATE

The Tiv are of the Semi-Bantu linguistic affinity. They speak one common language and have unique political ideologies and practices. The numerical strength of the Tiv is statistically put at about four million, ranking them as the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria (Kough 1). They occupy mainly the Benue state administrative areas of Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer, Gwer-west, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Makurdi, Logo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya (Utov 13). The Tiv are also indigenous to Taraba, Plateau and Nasarawa States.

Geographically, the Tiv are bounded in the North by the Arago and Lafia people of Nasarawa and Plateau States. Along the Southern boundaries are Obudu and Bekwarra people of Cross River State. In the east they are intermingled with the Jukun in Wukari and the Chamba of Taraba State. In the Western axis are the Iggede and Idoma of Benue state. According to Gerna, the Tiv share boundaries with Anambra and Cross River States of Nigeria in the South, Wukari (Taraba State) and Lafia (Nasarawa state) in the North, Otukpo, Apa and Oju local government areas of Benue state in the west and the Republic of Cameroon in the east (1).

The Origin and migration of Tiv has been a problem to historians and other scholars to unravel. According to East, the Tiv agree that their original home was the South. In genealogical table approximately eighteen generations are from the father Tiv to the present.

Tiv Genealogical Tree



Source: (Gbor, *Mdugh u Tiv...* 8)

Abeghe explains that, the Tiv genealogy dissects the Tiv family into two main groups of Ipusu and Ichongo from whom other family units in Tiv have now emerged (6). Going by the dissection, therefore, the descendants of Ichongo and Ipusu constitute not only the genealogical tree but also the basis of the social and political organisation of Tiv society (Makar 5).

Downes opines that, the migration of the Tiv into the present tribal area began around 1800 and the Tiv were present south of the Benue River in large numbers by 1850. He concludes by saying that the various clans shifted position until in 1890 when the boundaries were rather well established and permanent settlements undertaken (4).

Different scholars attribute several reasons for the migration of the Tiv to their present location. Akende Akende Abari attributes this to the socio-political upheavals that were witnessed in central and Southern African as a result of the rise of the Zulu nation. This caused series of inter-tribal wars such that the smaller tribes fled. Tiv

being one of them were hotly pursued by their enemies but with the assistance of the green snake (*Ikyarem*) which stretched across the Congo River, the Tiv miraculously were saved, crossing to safety. The Tiv in appreciation to the snake never kill it (Oral Interview).

The Tiv have sound reasonable habits that promote the national unity and make life very exciting. They are industrious with the energy to farm, a blessing from Takuruku. They are tireless, amicable and frank spoken people. The Tiv also show human esteem to visitors. East confirms this thus:

Tiv country is a friendly place, and generally speaking it is impossible to walk along a path for more than half a mile without meeting one of your fellow men, or coming to a little settlement where the householder is glad to welcome you into his guest house to smoke and pipe and chat with you, whether your skin be black or white (5).

Even though prior to the official recognition of the name Tiv by the colonial government, there were derogatory names applied to the Tiv by the neighbouring people such as munchi, cannibalistic munchi, war-like people, and pagans of Niger-Benue. Yet it was the desire of the Tiv to resist colonisation, repulse the attack of the jihad and other invasions that earned those indelible names among certain people. Majason describes the Tiv as being brave, solid and respectful people who defend their homes and preserve their independence against the constantly increasing danger of encroachment.

The Tiv are religious and Tiv religion as presented by its adherent does not at all pretend to give a single coherent picture. To understand Tiv religion, one must not look for a logical interconnectedness of its different elements. What one needs to do is to see Tiv religion in the context of a unified world view in which man, nature and the supernatural constitute a continuum (East 5). According to Ifesieh, the world-view of Africans in general and the Tiv in particular have religious traits based on a distinct

and rich traditional culture before the dilution of modernism. It is a body of beliefs about the universe which are common among members of any society and essentially demonstrated in their value system such as their philosophy of life, social conduct and morality, folklores, myths, rites and rituals, norms, etc. It is a totality of the people which gives a sense of direction (17-18) and purpose to life.

The Tiv traditional world-view displays a link between the physical and the spiritual worlds. Gbenda stressed that the two realms shade into each other whereas the physical world is made up of the earth, populated by humans, animals, rivers, forests, mountains, oceans among others, while the spiritual or invisible world is made up of ontological beings like the supreme God, the divinities or deities, the ancestors or living dead and the spirits. The traditionalists seek to live in a harmonious and peaceful existence with the entire world especially the spirit world (*Escatology in Tiv...19*).

The Tiv acknowledge that *Aôndo* is the Supreme Being who created the universe and generally directs it, but that He has given man mastery over this immediate environment and circumstances. The Tiv believe that the natural order should function for the good of man, the land as well as women should be fertile, and human beings should enjoy good health and fortune. In doing this, God has given man *akombo* (healing rituals), for productive and destructive purposes.

Akombo among the Tiv are linked with therapeutic practice to deal with needs of life. These include disaster, misfortune, illnesses, death and to ensure general well-being. Each *Akombo* has a name, and a corresponding medical or therapeutic treatment. The medical treatment employed usually bears the name of the particular *kombo* that caused the illness. *Akombo* is a protective symbol which is hung, planted or erected in fields or other kinds of property. The protective symbol, whether it is a

broken piece of pot, or calabash signifies the hidden force of the *akombo*. Each *akombo* has *atindi* (laws) *Iyangenev* or *mbamtswer* (prohibitions or taboos) which regulate behaviour in respect of the *akombo*. The laws stipulate ritual behaviour for the master of the *akombo*, the initiated as well as the uninitiated.

The laws show right dietary and sexual behaviour as well as correct conduct in several other socio-physical contacts. It is on this note that the Tiv acknowledge *akombo a ikyôôr* which was used to guard Female virginity. An emblem of snail shell was hung on the girl's neck that symbolised her virginity and could only be removed by her husband through the priestess who was initiated into *ikyôôr* cult. This practice ensured stability within and outside marriage in Tiv. Yuhe intimates that:

The act of violation may be done by disregard for the laws, taboos or prohibitions, by handling the object which symbolises the force, without imitation, by revealing the intricacies of the forces to another person who has not been initiated into ritual or by stealing the *akombo*. In whatever way *akombo* are violated, the offender is punished accordingly. The punishment can come in form of illness, or misfortune (39).

The maintenance of law and order in Tiv was therefore effective with the use of *akombo* until the introduction of western education and Christianity.

3.1.1 Social Organisation and Political Structure

The social organisation of the Tiv is founded on kinship constructed by tracing descent “exclusively” through the male. The Tiv are thus a descent group. Through the four universal features of kinship -a lengthy infant maturation time, a marital bond creating an exclusive sexual and economic relationship between individual members of the group, a gender based on division of labour and an incest regulation are here Tiv kinship is unique with three distinct forms (Wegh 34). These are: consanguinity (kinship based on blood) affinity (kinship based on marriage) and secondary kinship based on choice outside blood and marriage. The architect of the social system is based on the concept of *tar* - an area peopled by units of families tracing their descent

to a single ancestor. In this way, *Tar* Tiv which is peopled by the sons of Tiv can in turn be understood as aggregating other *ityar* (plural of *tar*) each of which is known after the plural form of the children of Ipusu and Ichongo.

Bohannan has identified the “principle of segmental opposition” as basic to this social structure. According to him, *ityar* made up of descendants of ancestors who were brothers developed overtime into an inclusive tar (lineage) named after the plural form of their “fathers” name as opposed to lineage descended from more distant relations (301). The lineage system is the basis of the Tiv family as well as the pattern of settlement and the political system. Because the individual’s place in society was determined by kinship and genealogy, group challenge was in continuity, balance and co-operation. Egalitarian values and other cultural systems like exchange marriage and leadership based on gerontocracy were therefore invaluable ingredients of this continuity, balance and cooperation.

In classical anthropological writings, the Tiv are a stateless society characterised by the absence of a central authority supported by administrative and judicial machinery. Their political system is characterised by law and order maintained by elders meeting at the different levels and depths of the various lineages. While the compound is the basic unit of the political organisation, the lineage is the most elaborate. The Tiv recognise authority in the roles and status of their social order (Tseayo 45). They conceptualise the object of politics as *tar sôron* which literally means the repair of the land. As Wegh has argued, *Tar Sôron* is not just a physical activity but a social and spiritual initiative designed to ensure that there is balance and harmony in the land. In the process of *tar sôron*, (repairing the land) two councils are important. These are the *Ya* Council and *Ityô* Council (*Marriage, Family...18*).

Ya is the compound. Each compound is named after its *Orya* (head) and is administered by a council made up of senior male members of the compound. The *Orya* chairs this council whose responsibilities include, the pursuit of the political, social, religious and economic well being of the compound. The *Orya* as the head of the *ya* council has the responsibility of maintaining daily peace (of the compound) and settling such other disputes that arise among members of the compound. In doing this, he is vested with the authority to punish and ensure compliance depending on the nature of the offense. In addition to these responsibilities, the *Orya* is also vested with the power to determine sites for new buildings, admit, entertain and expel visitors, distribute farm land and identify burial positions (Wegh 18). The *Orya*'s ability to discharge his responsibilities can build or split the compound. Every compound head therefore tries to be fair and firm in administering his compound.

The *Ityô* Council on the other hand is supreme in Tiv "worldview". *Orhembe Ityô ga*-(no person is above his *Ityô*). *Ityô* provides political and social context within which a man is known and placed in society. It is his patrilineage. The *Ityô* council, called *Ijir* (Judgment), has funeral, religious, economic and political responsibilities which they discharge in accordance with tradition, its membership representing the different "family" or sub-lineages that comprise the particular lineage. The council has sovereign responsibilities and its decisions are normally accepted as binding on all members of the group (Tseayo 15). The *Orya* and *Ityô* were the custodians of Tiv morality including sexual morals. Any case of sexual misconduct was settled by them in order not to break the family. Incest and rape were checked as well as pre-marital sex.

3.1.2 Tiv Religion

Tiv religious thought is hinged on three basic concepts. These are *Aondo*, *Tsav* and *Akombo* -all of which work together for stability, harmony and communal well being (Wegh, *Marriage, Family...* 42). Though *Aôndo* is the Tiv word for God, the Tiv do not have a personal relationship with Him. According to oral tradition, *Aondo* used to live nearer the earth but was forced to retreat into the skies after he was struck by a woman pounding food.

There is however a deep acknowledgement of the hand of *Aôndo* (God) in the physical setting as in *Aôndo ngu nôôn* (raining), *Aôndo ngu kumen* (thunder), *Aondo ngu nyiar* (lightening) and *Aôndo ta yange* (sun light). According to Wegh, though the relationship between the Tiv and *Aôndo* may seem “remote” to outsiders, the Tiv acknowledge that most of the actions necessary for the existence and sustenance of life are carried out only by *Aôndo* (God) (*Marriage, Family...*42). This world view leaves the day to day regulations of relationships between individuals on the one hand and between individuals and the cosmos on the other hand to *Tsav* and *Akombo*.

Tsav is a reference to “a cosmic potency internalised in man as part of his personality” (Rubingh 69). Gundu has argued that it manifests in people in three different forms. The first and most potent form appears like the crown of a cock and covers the heart of the individual with “claws”. The second is a dwarf type with no “claws *Kpum utsa* (a short tail) (19), while the third type is a small point projection from the heart which gives the possessor some awareness of the supernatural. This is called *ishima nomsuor* (a man’s heart) by the Tiv. Those who possess *tsav* are called *Mbatsav* and their activities are theoretically geared towards *tar sôron*-good governance, personal comfort, security and communal well-being. Practically however, the extent to which any *ormbatsav* can be beneficial to society in the context

of his activities is a factor of the type of *tsav* “growing” on his heart and particular *akombo* being manipulated at the point in time. This is probably why Bohannan argues that *tsav* is morally neutral and can be deployed for either good or bad. If deployed for good, society is assured of a potent social control mechanism. On the other hand, if it is deployed for evil individuals can be bewitched- leading to sickness and sometimes death. Other malevolent aspects include crop failure, bad dreams, ill luck, barrenness and the like (15).

The third basic concept in Tiv religion which is *akombo* can be defined as some unique mystical forces deployed to ensure a balanced and healthy *tar* (community) in which individuals are at peace with each other and the physical components of the environment are regulated and protected from “damage”. Each *kombo* is represented by an emblem, which could be any relic ranging from a potsherd to a carved piece of wood. Though an acceptable classification of the whole range of *akombo* is yet to be done here, the Tiv see *akombo* in two major categories. Category one is *akombo a kiriki* while category two is *akombo atamen*. Each ailment and socio-economic component in society has its *kombo* with full compliments of emblem and a structured process of *sôron* (restoration) when its foundation is undermined or violated by people who come into contact with it. Each *kombo* has its master whose specialty is in ensuring a viable role for the *kombo* in the community. He does this by “restoring” (*soron*) the *kombo*’s equilibrium if and when it is violated, thus, neutralising the damage that would otherwise have been visited on the violator or even the whole community as the case may be.

Though in some societies, marriage is acknowledged to be in existence once there is both sexual and economic cooperation (union) between people of the opposite sex, amongst the Tiv, however, such union does not necessarily imply marriage. To

fully appreciate the Tiv concept of marriage, one must first understand the way they conceptualise the family. The Tiv word for family is *tsombor* (Wegh, *Marriage, Family...* 18). *Tsombor* is also the word for the umbilical cord, which joins mother and child before birth. Conceptualising the family as *tsombor* is acknowledging its organic unity and the common blood implied in its composition. Consequently, the Tiv family which is also the basic genealogical unit can comprise the couple and their children or the man, his several wives, their children including their wives after several generations. The family is therefore theoretically speaking an “endless” line of relations and offspring tracing their descent to a common ancestor. Marriage to the Tiv is therefore more than a sexual and economic union. It is a strategy to perpetuate the family through having more and more children. This strategy also allows the development of complicated group alliances aimed at maintaining societal equilibrium and cohesion. Because of all these, the perceived “ability” of the woman to have children and contribute to a farmland (in producing food) were primary considerations in the choice of a woman as a wife - since it was only additional children (produced by the new wife) and food (also produced by her) that could ensure the growth of the family and guard against its extinction. Male children derived their rights primarily from their affiliation with their father’s *ityô* (kinsmen) on the one hand and their mother’s *igba* (kinsmen) on the other hand. While a male child regarded his father’s kinsmen as his *Ityô*, they in turn regarded him as their *anter*, according him the full compliments of rights and privileges due to him as the son of their brother.

Conversely, his mother’s kinsmen regarded him as their *anigba* and also accorded him full compliments due to the son of their *ingyôr* (sister). As *anigba*, a man could demand and get full attention from his mother’s kinsmen and in time of

stress and conflicts, he was the most appropriate person to act as an emissary between his *Ityô* and his mother's kinsmen.

In Tiv Religion, an individual's right to life, to his children's lives and welfare is protected by a divinity known as *Swem*. It is responsible for religious and social justice. It protects the innocent people, but punishes those who violate religious and social justice by bringing all kinds of sufferings upon the lives of the Tiv whether they do their evil deeds under the auspices of *azôv*, *akombo* or *mbatsav*; *swem* is capable of dealing with the matter effectively. It swells the stomach of the guilty person and kills him, but protects the innocent. Thus, it is the last resort in seeking for justice. *Swem*'s emblem is made up of a small pot which is filled with soil and ashes. Certain leucis and feathers of certain birds are inserted in the contents of the small *tsua* (pot) and camwood is smeared at several places round the pot. A rope is tied at the brim with a loop as a handle. After *Swem* is fully prepared, the priest asks the person who is receiving *Swem* to make his or her declaration of his or her oath. The client declares loudly as follows:

Swem ne a ungwam
Aluer me a er or yuhe!
Mea ta wanchovorigyôô!
Me a vihi or ma kwagh!
Me a er ma or ifer!
Me a wua ma or wan!
Me a vihi ma or iya!
Me a vihi ma or ikyee!
Me a vihi ma or ilev!
Me a kaamer tar u vihi!
Swem ne a morom yav me kpe!
Kpa aluer ka sha apera i lu wuan mo!
Mbaveafakwaghsha mi cii!
Swem a mor ve yav ve kpe!

English

This swem listen!
If I have envied anybody!
If I have maltreated an orphan!
If I have frustrated a disabled person!

If I have destroyed anybody's thing!
 If I have done evil to anybody!
 If I have killed anybody's child!
 If I have destroyed anybody's animal!
 If I have said that the society should be bad you, swem swell my stomach let me die!, but if it is by false that I am being killed you swem swell their stomachs and let them die (Dzurgba, *On The Tiv of Central...* 198-199).

After the client has completed the statement of the oath, the priest hands over swem to him, and he starts the journey back home. While he carries swem, he must not talk to anybody, unless he puts it down, and his hand washed before eating anything. When the client arrive his compound, he goes round the compound at the front of every house. As the people walk across the ashes, swem gets hold of them and passes judgement. Those who are not involved in the case, swem will not swell their stomach and they will not die. It is on the authority of swem that the council of elders settles serious religious and social problems effectively. When an individual person's actions contravene the norms of the group, his conscience first of all tells him that he has done wrong. Signs of guilt appear in the form of disease and misfortunes. When this occurs the swem oath of the ancestors is taken to assess sanctions. Before taking the swem oath, a Tiv man usually pours out his conscience expressing not to go contrary to the established code of behaviour. That if he does, let him be punished, if not those evil perpetrators be punished. According to Anshi, the person will declare his innocence and uprightness to the public and to swem in these words:

Er m hingir or hen hunda u terem je,
M ker or kwase ga,
M vihi or wan ga,
Man er nan ve kwagh a lu tseren mo?
Nahan yô m va u va tesen Ishyo yam,
Me hembe swem.
Aluer ibo ka i yam
Un a tam a gbihi kpenegh
Kpa aluer m ngu a ishyô iyo i yô,
Swem un a kôr or u nan lu wuan mo la!

English

Since I became a man in my father's compound,
I have not befriended anybody's wife,
I have not bewitched anybody's son.
And why am I suffering?
So I have come to show my innocence,
I will break swem.
If the guilt is mine
It will strike me dead.
But if I am innocent,
Swem will seize the person who is
killing me (*African Moral...* 15)

It is through swem that the individual and society's rights are protected and justice ensured for all. In the swem oath alone, we can observe that there is great ethical consciousness among the Tiv, which serves as an operative factor in assessing the moral behaviours of the Tiv. It restores confidence, trust, love, peace, pride of virginity and chastity, prohibition of incest, prohibition of adultery and rape.

3.2 THE ORIGIN OF *IKYÔÔR CULT* IN TIV

To the Tiv man, *Aôndo* (God) is the creator of the world and the first ancestor of mankind. He believes in the supremacy of *Aondo* and His power in controlling the forces of nature. According to Dzurgba, *Aôndo* is the Supreme Being. His size is indicated by the firmament and the earth. His power, wisdom, presence, supremacy and sovereign authority are expressed in nature, functions, continuity and mysteries of objects, abstract forces and experiences such as mountains, valleys, thunder, lightening, darkness, sickness and death. All the emanations from the firmament are the functions of *Aondo*. Thus, God flashes, thunders, rains; shines the sun, darkens the earth and blows the wind. God is the primary cause of all events in the universe in general and in human affairs in particular (*On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 192).

Dzurgba says that *Aôndo* created *nomsoor* (man) and *kwase* (woman) in the East of the earth. God created them in the firmament and he let them descend to the

earth. The man and the woman came down from the firmament to occupy the earth. They were naked. Thus, the Tiv refer to the East as the place where a woman came down naked. This suggests that the two ancestors produced different races. But the Tiv view is that God created different races (*akuraior*). This is to say that for each race, God created a man and woman. The residence of God is in the firmament, the vault of heaven, but not on the earth. The earth was made for the people (Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 193). It is in this context that the Tiv turns to the Supreme Being, (*Aondo*) in times of trouble.

According to Idowu, the Supreme Being is a very important source of moral value. The basis of African morality and the Tiv in particular is the divine nature and essence of God. The Supreme Being made man and implanted in him the sense of right and wrong. That is why among the Tiv, *Aôndo* (God) is addressed as *Ter U Wang* (The pure Lord). Similarly, the Yoruba address Him as the *Oba Mimo* (The Pure King). By giving man *Inja* (character) God also provides man with the oracle of the heart which is to guide him and determine his moral life (qtd. in Shishima 55-56). In this regard, the ethics of African Religion in general and the Tiv in particular is embedded in the ideas and beliefs about what is right and wrong, what is a good or bad character. It is also embedded in the conceptions of satisfactory social relations and attitudes held by the members of the society. It is embedded, furthermore, in the forms or patterns of behaviour that are considered by members of the society to bring about social harmony and co-operative living, justice and fairness (qtd. in Shishima 49).

For the Tiv, *Aôndo* (God) is the greatest source of ethical values. His full name is *Gbaaondo* which means “natural truth”. He created the universe and mankind. When God created human beings, He gave them a moral capacity. He gave man

Ishima (heart). The heart is invested with the capacities of knowing, thinking, reasoning, willing, deciding, choosing and exercise of freedom. It is from the heart that thought, motive and intention arise. Thus, the heart is responsible for moral decisions and actions (Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 212).

Ishima is an equivalent of conscience. A distinction between good and bad, right and wrong is based on two types of heart: *Ishima i dedoo* (a good heart) and *Ishima i bo* (a bad heart). The fact that a person is capable of doing good and bad actions on different occasions suggests that the heart has two natures. Thus, a distinction between a good and a bad person is made on the dominance of either one of the natures of his heart. A good person is characterised by *dooshima* (love), *Bemshima* (kindness), *Ishima i wan* (patience), *Ishima i saansaan* (happiness), *Ishima i koron Iyol tsaha* (self-control), *Ishima i mhôôn* (mercifulness) and so forth.

God rewards good actions and punishes evil doers. Thus, God is a moral judge of human conduct. God's concern for moral conduct is mainly for the purpose of maintaining cordial human relationships and efficient institutions (*On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...*213).

According to Akaaer Nyam, Movihinze Maza, Ashiamar Zerver, Mluwam Adaga, Verem Tse and Adzuana Tarpav the Tiv man recognises God as the Supreme Being, that because of His power beyond human control, it is right to do good and avoid evil in order to please him and gain his favour (oral interview). That is why Dzurgba says:

In Tiv traditional religion, divinities (*akombo*) perform specialised functions in human society. They serve in the areas of human reproduction, health medicine, farming, hunting, fishing, trading, marriage, family and so on. Some of the divinities are *Ahina*, *Igbe*, *Ikyôôr*, *gbianjôv*, *Atsewe*, *Ikyo* and *Akombodam*. The problems associated with divinities are vomiting, bleeding, abortion, irregular menstruation, sterility, impotence, headache, chest ache, stomach ache, rib-ache, and cough. These problems are believed to result from a violation of the divinities' taboos, which regulate human conduct. Such

violations necessitate the acts of confession, propitiation, expiation, appeasement and submission. Acts of adoration, praise and thanksgiving follow divine blessings: sacrifices to the divinities include crops, fowls, goats, except in the case of dog which the Tiv people do not eat; the clients receive portions of their sacrifices. Each divinity has its own rules for its own clients; human conduct is therefore well regulated in everyday life (*On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*...214).

Gbenda says *Akombo* in general terms are believed to have been given by *Aondo* (God). God is active; He takes an active part in affairs of the people and *akombo a sôron* is what reflects his invocation (5). *Ikyôôr cult* which is believed to be one of the *akombo* as portrayed by (Dzurgba 214) can therefore be traced to the recognition of *Aondo* in the life of a Tiv man.

The desire of the Tiv to uphold morality motivated the introduction of the *akombo a Ikyôôr* to assist the young girls to be pure and chaste before they are given in marriage. *Akombo a kyôôr* are as old as humanity, *Aondo* created the world and gave the Tiv man the knowledge and grace to identify this *akombo* in order to help maintain morality through preservation of virginity (Agbinda Veror, Adohor Hur, Gber Aorga, Taryohol Hughur Mchivga Lanve, Chieshe Tsavmbu, Wombo Anzenge, Mwalaan Nyityo and Akaghir Zungwe (Oral Interview). There is no trace as to when and how the *Ikyôôr* cult came into existence but then the Tiv have a general belief that *Aondo* gave this cult to the ancestors through deities and it is regarded as one of the *akombo* that checks morality of young unmarried girls in order to maintain a harmonious relationship between man and *Aondo* (Oral interview).

3.2.1 Initiation into *Ikyôôr* Cult

In the past, there were strict laws or customs governing African societies. Those who could not keep to such stipulations were severely punished. The ancient Tiv viewed pre-marital sex as a taboo and in turn cherished and highly honoured virginity as a sign of fidelity in marriage and pride to the parents as a disciplined

family. In this regard, the *Ikyôôr* cult in Tiv was a traditional measure used to preserve and prevent pre-marital sex among the youth. Thus, the violation of this rite became an offence to the husband and it constituted an offence punishable by the *akombo* visitation until appropriate propitiation was effected. Both the man and the girl involved in the illicit sexual relationship were to be punished, so that the man was rendered impotent and the girl infertile until after appropriate appeasement. Apart from the implications of punishment through *Akombo*, the girl in particular became subject of social shame and disgrace which also extended to her family members and relations. This practice facilitated much behaviour among the young and old and to a large extent moral deviance was limited. There was more stability in marriage and the entire Tiv was morally sound and these contemporary social vices were also significantly reduced. Torkula in support of the above says:

In Tiv culture, marriage is seen as an institution through which mankind perpetuates its lineage by procreation. As it is commonly practiced in every society, before marriage the right over a woman's sexuality and procreative capability are the responsibility of her parents or group. The rights are however, transferred to the husband at marriage. Thus, the violators of man's right of sexuality over his wife (adultery) constituted an offence punishable by the *akombo* visitation until appropriate propitiation was affected. Hence unmarried girl among the Tiv was tied *Ikyôôr* (snail shell) on her neck by her parents in order to keep men from having unauthorised affair with her and whoever went to bed with her was rendered impotent and the girl infertile until both of them underwent appropriate appeasement (*The Tiv Cultural Institution of Marriage...4*).

Ikyôôr cult existed a long time ago, when respect and love for tradition and custom was held in high regard; in the days of our great ancestors, it was a wonderful and precious custom in the Tiv (Boh 3). The *Ikyôôr* cult was a serious traditional practice that was responsible for the observance of virginity among the unmarried girls, the cult was solely developed to curtail pre-marital sex in young persons, since it was noted that the female virginity was cherished and taken in high esteem by our fore

fathers. When young girls are growing up, they were initiated into the *Ikyôôr* emblem in order to guide their virginity until marriage.

The Tiv looked upon *Ikyôôr* cult as a powerful mystical force that guided against pre-marital sex, sterility and impotence, protected virgins and cured of untimely menopause. Its activities were meant to be carried out only by women who no longer had sexual intercourse and had reached her rightful menopause age. Also it was those fully initiated into *Ikyôôr* cult that had the right to initiate and put the *Ikyôôr* right when violated or infringed.

Beautiful as this custom was, the corrupt minds of the rich and defiled individuals, little by little, kept making attempt to stamp it out... But my children, good will always triumph over evil. Despite the brilliant and devious attempts to destroy this custom, it's beatify and value helped to keep it intact, and it has been preserved through ages to date (Boh 4).

One of the prevailing obnoxious acts in contemporary society is the awkward behaviour toward sex; the practice of pre-marital sex is one of the most serious ways in which sex has been scandalously abused (Ajiki 157). There is a big shift in the sacredness that was attached to sex to a liberal attitude to sex. Sex legitimacy is, therefore, no longer reserved till after marriage.

The concern is how one is initiated into this *ikyoor* cult, because the act of pre-marital sex holds on the contemporary society and the need to employ measures to checkmate this attitude for the survival of our Tiv society. Hence initiation into *Ikyôôr* cult could be the option. The research therefore explains the initiation process and encourages the reinstatement of *Ikyôôr* cult to ensure a morally acceptable society in the midst of our contemporary challenges.

Ikyôôr (snail) is looked upon as one of the serious occult practices among the Tiv that relate to human fertility, security and safety of human affairs that the Tiv

venerate. Its shell symbolises an emblem of the cult that is believed to be guiding and preventing unmarried girls from unauthorised sex (Iyortyom 16).

Plate I: A picture of young girls with the *Ikyôôr* emblem on their necks.



Source: Field experience at Abagu 12/12/16

Plate II: The Pictures of snail shells and mama Ikyortser Agbenge trying to explain to the researcher how they were used.



Source: Field experience At Abagu, Gboko LGA on 18/06/2016.

For Moti and Wegh, the Ikyôôr shell worn on the neck of an unmarried girl was highly symbolic in the sense that it represented the entire cult. Ikyôôr is a mystical force and is represented in the cultic emblem of *Ikyôôr* shell (25). The shell was therefore worn on the neck to make it visible for people to see that the *i yange wankwase la a Ikyôôr* (young unmarried girl is protected) (Atondo Iyo, oral interview) and the visibility of the *Ikyôôr* emblem prevented pre-marital sex among youths in Tiv. Mama Ikyortser Agbenge in an oral interview confirmed the above statement by Moti and Wegh by saying that, *Ikyôôr* was highly cherished, honoured and appreciated in the pre-colonial Tiv society. When the young girls were growing, they hung on them an emblem of a shell that symbolised their virginity and could only be removed by their husbands after the consummation of the marriage and if the husband found that the girl was a virgin, he sent a she goat and imperforated wrapper to the mother-in-law in appreciation of her role in training their daughter to be a good wife.

The initiation is done by Igbian-Ijov priestess. Here Boh describes the initiation process. At the shrine, (of the Igbian-Ijov priestess) three old women, and three young virgins enter, in a procession. The three virgins kneel down stage left, and two old women take centre stage while the woman with the small calabash containing initiation materials take stage right. One of the old women inspects the virgins to confirm their purity by touching their waist. The priestess now ties the small shell round their necks and sprinkles water on them (4).

As the process of initiation continues, the song goes:

Icham: *Zer, zer wan wou u kwase, Ikyôôr sha u kuran un.*
Tie your daughter the shell for the protection of her virginity.

Ger: *Wuna ingbian-Ijov due ve (2x)*
U due ve, udue ve, u due ve zere se (2x)
Zer wan wou u kwase Ikyôôr
Zer un Ikyôôr sha Ikyer jighjigh (5x)

*Zer un jigh-jigh sha Ikyer
Sha u kuran un ka ieren i
Tiv i mimi, i mimikpôr
Vookokokoko...*

English: The Ingbian-Ijov priestess has appeared (2x)
It has appeared, it has appeared (2x)
To witness the tying of shells on virgins' necks (2x)
Tie your daughter the snail shell to prevent her virginity as the Tiv custom demands.

(The chant is repeated till the end of the process, it is chanted by an elderly woman).

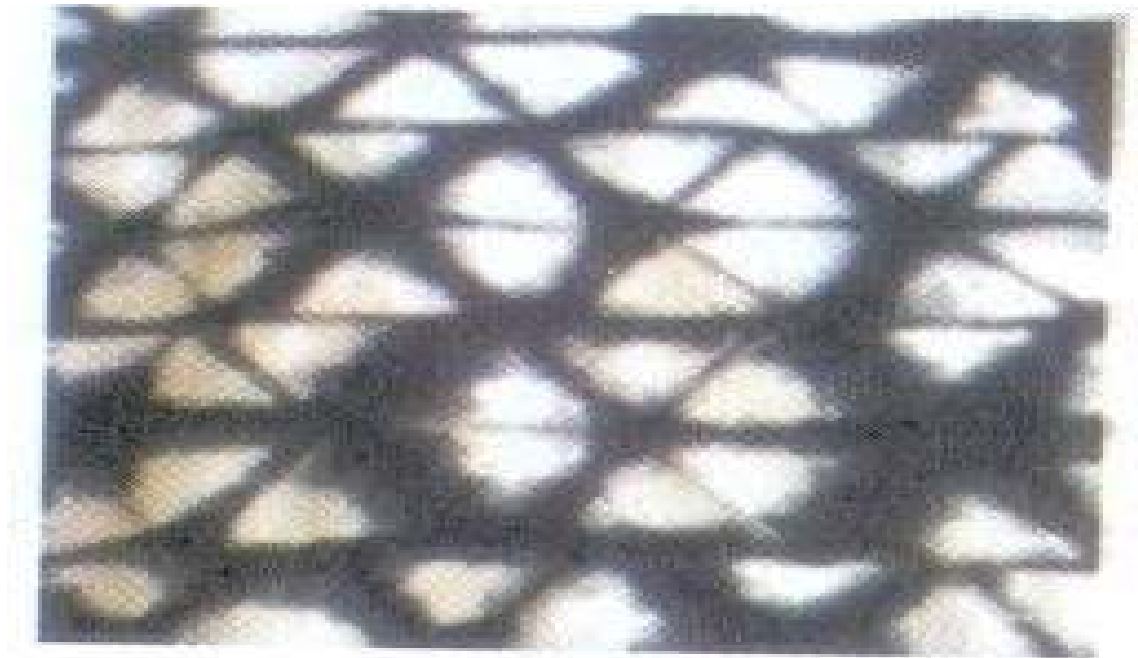
After the tying of the snail shells, the priestess says; recognise that the tying of this shell is a sign of your purity. It therefore means that no man will go into you before and even in marriage until the shell is untied, the virgins respond by nodding their heads (Boh 5).

The process of initiation was a special occasion for the young girls who were proud to wear their snail shell on their necks to prove their fidelity to the whole world that, they were pure and would remain chaste till the right husband comes to take them in marriage (Afanyo Udum, Oral Interview).

As an extremely important aspect of the institution of marriage in Tiv society Dzurgba says virginity was seen as the basis for marital faithfulness and obedience on the part of the woman, and these benefits doubled if the husband also was someone who had never had sex before marriage (On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...133). The first night experience was important to the couple and their families. Their joy would be complete only if the girl had been found to be a virgin by her husband. Virginity was maintained through the initiation of tying *Ikyôôr* on the girl's neck. Therefore, parents, especially the girl's, waited anxiously for the news from their son-in law. A few days later, they would receive a goat as appreciation by the husband for keeping the girl from sexual immorality. A cloth could also be received by the mother-in law;

she would inspect the cloth anxiously. If she saw a hole made at the centre of the cloth, the message was that their daughter was not a virgin during the first sexual intercourse of the first night in marriage. The mother would weep with a deep grief because she has failed to protect her daughter from being spoiled by evil men. On the contrary, a cloth without a hole implied that the mother had been successful in protecting her daughter's virginity until she had gotten married as a virgin.

Plate III: imperforated wrapper to demonstrate a gift for the mother-in-law whose daughter got married as a virgin



Source: Field experience at Terwase Agbadu, Makurdi LGA on 20/6/2016

Plate IV: A perforated wrapper to demonstrate the traditional practice regarding lost of virginity



Source: Field experience at Terwase Agbadu, Makurdi LGA on 20/6/2016

Boh presents this aptly in his literary piece. In a discussion with Humbe and Ngodoo, he (Humbe) approaches Ngodoo, you see, my father is very wealthy. He owns the largest yam ban in this village. I can do anything for you only if you agree to be my friend (Boh 11).

Ngodoo responded:

You are trying to go against tradition, my father will kill me. Can't you see this? (Indicating the shell on her neck) Can't you see the shell on my neck? Do you have respect on tradition at all? My dear, let me inform you, with this shell on my neck, I am not supposed to talk with you concerning what you are talking about. Tradition demands that... (11).

With the interaction Humbe had with Ngodoo while on the way to fetch water, Ngodoo's father Tyotswam meets them and is surprised at what he is seeing:

Woo! Ngodoo, what are you doing here? How long will it take you to fetch water and get home? Why will it take a whole day to fetch water for me? And you (pointing at Ngodoo), I don't want to see you with my daughter again (pointing at Humbe) the next time I see you by my daughter again, consider yourself in trouble. (Humbe tries to explain) Stupid! I don't want to hear anything from you ... shut up (Boh 12).

The above discussion shows how virginity was seriously guarded by parents after initiation of young girls into this *Ikyôôr* cult. No parent was prepared to face the challenge of receiving from the son-in-law, a cloth perforated at the centre, showing the infidelity of his daughter (Sambe Dzua oral interview). On this account the immediate community of the girl's parents and the public will admit that the parents were irresponsible. They could even be ridiculed. This is the reason why parents were anxious in giving out their daughters early in marriage (Wegh, *Between Continuity...* 60).

In the discussion with Ngodoo, Humbe tries to persuade her to fall in love with him so that he can spend his father's wealth on Ngodoo, but she is conscious of the oath she took with the *Ingbian-Jov* priestess and remind Humbe of the snail shell on her neck as tradition demands. Ngodoo's father Tyotswan is angry with Humbe in the sense that, he is trying to destroy his daughter in order not to bring shame on the family. Tyotswan queries the daughter to show his annoyance, that Ngodoo is not supposed to be seen around with Humbe. This is how it was done, a young unmarried girl with snail shells were expected to be decent, not to be allowed to mingle with boys that could attempt to spoil them. The above statement is confirmed in an oral interview with the following: Tile Agev, Tyodzughur Orpin, Iortyom Kpertyem, Alaghga Bologo Iorza Amoakaa, Tiza Fefa, Mbawuan Iortyer, Ashilu Tindim and Veremga Adem.

3.2.2 The Relevance of the *Ikyôôr* in the Preservation of Virginity, Integrity and Honour

The *Ikyôôr* cult emerged in Tiv as a result of complete observance of female virginity. The cult was developed to preserve young girls till they are matured to have sexual union. Even when a woman was married, sex could only occur when the symbol or emblem had been united by an old initiated woman of the *Ikyôôr* cult (the Ingbian-Ijov priestess).

According to Dzurgba, in classical Tiv society, the integrity of the family in general and of the girl, the new wife, was measured by the virginity of the newly married woman. In every marriage, the husband expected his wife to be a virgin. She was expected to be someone who had never had sex. This is to say that she was expected to be *kwase u or nan lu a yav a nan gayo* (a woman who had never had sexual intercourse with any man). This means that the woman's sex organ had not been penetrated by man. It was believed that a woman who had never had sex before marriage would not be easily penetrated by her husband. Thus, the first penetration by the husband would cause some tearing of the membrane, bloodstain and pain. These signs during the first night of sexual intercourse proved beyond doubt, that the woman had never had sexual intercourse before she got married. The following morning, the man's parents would privately ask their son what his experience concerning his wife's virginity. The parents would be very happy if their son's *Kwase uhe* (new wife) was found to have been a virgin, but they would become cold if she was not a virgin (*On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 123). These ill feelings continued and the entire family hated the newly married wife from the beginning because of her infidelity to their son.

It is important to note here that, the divinity associated with the snail shell hanging on the girl's neck made it difficult for her to disappoint her parents since she

was afraid to contact illnesses like waist pain, stomach ache, and infertility in women, irregular menstruation and pre-mature menopause. According to Hongo Aluena, Vembera Shisha, Akaabiam Nyiutsa, Tarzoho Kilokyo, Anenge Dzever and Tulen Temen, some of the issues mentioned above were not really in place but it was said to scare the young girls from indulging in pre-marital affairs (oral interview). With this, there was sanity in the pre-colonial societies. There were clear taboos that set the boundaries within which sexual relationship were allowed or sanctioned. Stiff sanctions existed against rape and fornication. Each girl at puberty underwent the *Ikyôôr* akombo ritual (snail shell ritual) to forestall rape and ensure chastity. In the event of rape or fornication, the aggressor was required to propitiate the *Ikyôôr Akombo* ritual without which he ran the risk of persistent ill-luck.

The same exemplary level of faithfulness was expected in the woman at marriage. She was expected to abstain from both *Jimba* (lasciviousness) and *Idya* (adultery). There existed stiff sanctions, (one among them was *Ikyôôr*) against infidelity and no man could violate the chastity of his neighbour's wife and still expect the approval of the society since such violation was capable of killing friendship. Culprits were heavily fined and stigmatised by the public. Adultery and fornication in whatever form were frowned at by traditional Tiv society. Fidelity was highly respected in pre-marital and post-marital affairs especially on the part of the woman to earn her a good name and reputation in the society. It was believed that virginity had positive influence on the unity, harmony, stability and peacefulness of the marriage. Virginity measured mutual goodwill, understanding, tolerance, trust and cooperation. It sustained mutual love and caring. It facilitated integration and blending in body and spirit. The couple became emotionally attached to each other. All these were attributed largely to the fact that the woman got married as a virgin

(Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 124), supported by *Ingbian-Ijôv* priestess by tying of a snail shell on the neck to regulate and control the moral life of a young lady before marriage.

Akombo are spiritual forces created by Aondo to regulate the cosmos and to protect it from malfunction (East 76). Hence *Akombo a Ikyôôr* provides a means of social control within the society or community. The laws, taboos and prohibitions associated with the cult, act as deterrents to immoral actions of members of the community. Ikyôôr cult punishes people that break its laws and taboos.

According to Udele Mbazendan, Mbatoon Melaba, Mhunde Abagu, Tartongu Dzuana, Tartenger Vihive and Akende Shabem, *Ikyôôr* was a serious *akombo* that the Tiv respected because of the punishment attached to offenders, but western influence and Christianity have made it in such a way that young people are no longer afraid of the *akombo a Ikyôôr*, therefore, they involve in pre-marital sex without fear (oral interview).

Considering the way and manner in which youth display their immoral attitudes today, one would be tempted to say that western civilisation should not have emerged since the disadvantages are almost more than the advantages. In support of this statement, Ayenge Begh in an oral interview agreed that western civilisation has had a great sad effect on the Tiv society, since our Tiv society today has turned out to be individualistic. If one sees a person's child misbehaving it would be difficult to caution such a child because the parents would not be happy that, they have not sent anybody as guards on their child. AyilamoTortya, Mbahiin Torna and Gbua Zuemo affirmed this statement and added that this is the level to which our Tiv society has deteriorated. They urge the Tiv elders to look in to this in order to solve the problem (oral interview).

According to Iyoughwe Asema, Shivaa Tembeyo and Mbakeren Tsavbo *Zer wan wou u kwase Ikyôôr sha mon* (Tie your daughter a snail shell on her neck), was a popular saying for those who were not doing this on time since Ikyôôr guarded the young girl against pre-marital sex. It was a song sang to those who delayed in the tying of snail shell on their daughter's neck. It was a pride and fashion but today Christianity has seen this as "*Akombo civir*" (worshiping of Idols) but they insisted in their discussion that this tradition must be revived in order to maintain purity in our today's society (oral interview).

The Tiv are convinced of the orderliness of the universe, which comes from God. This orderliness has to be maintained in order to secure the prosperity of the land. *Akombo a Ikyôôr* therefore has a part to play in the maintenance of the cosmic order.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RELIGIO-CULTURAL IMPORTANCE OF *IKYÔÔR* CULT IN THE PRESERVATION OF VIRGINITY IN TIV SOCIETY

4.1 THE MORALITY OF VIRGINITY IN TIVLAND

Virginity is one of the concepts that seem to have generated much controversy in the society today. Within the Tiv society where we have fourteen local governments, there have been controversies regarding the preservation of virginity. In these local government areas, the practice varies from one local government to another. This has continued to attract scholarly attention and research. For instance, the case of companionship; companionship in this context is a practice among the Tiv by which a man has a temporary union with a woman of a kinship unit within which marriage is not allowed. Or better, it is a temporary union between a man and a woman of an exogamic kinship unit. In some parts of Tivland, this practice is called *Ikyar*, which means friendship or companionship. The man and the woman are called *Ikyar* respectively, a word which means a friend or companion. In other parts of Tivland, the practice is called *Angbiankwase*, meaning a woman of an exogamic kinship segment. This indicates that the union is between persons who are regarded by the Tiv as brother and sister in the classificatory sense (Tarbo 35). As a matter of fact, the practice is never carried out within an *ingol* kin which extends up to the tenth generation therefore it can never be said to be a union between third cousins.

According to Tarbo, in Kparev, when a man wishes to make *Ikyar* with a girl, he approaches her, if she agrees, he begins to make presents to her and her parents. He may even have sexual intercourse with her at her home; but normally he elopes with her to his home, and celebrates a feast at which he invites his age mates and friends. The parents of girl go to the man's home and ask his elders to return their daughter to them. Before returning the girl to the parents, her *Ikyar* makes presents to them and

kills a goat or sheep for them. If the girl has been found a virgin, her companion gives a she-goat to the mother as a virginity award (36). This is known as untying of the snail shell. The *Ikyar* of the girl also gives some money to the mother which is called “tying of cloth round the waist of the girl’s mother”. This is done to the girl before she is taken back to her compound. When the practice is carried out in this way in *Kparev*, we say a man “*kua a wankwase* or *angbiankwase*” meaning (a man has brought his companion to his home). He taunts his age mates who have not had companions and sings a song of taunt.

Another man may decide to stay with his companion in her home for some time after making specific presents to her parents. In this case, *Kparev* use the expression *nyor wankwase* or *angbiankwase* (cohabit with a woman not married to). The persons involved in *Ikyar* are always free to break it off and contract marriage because *Ikyar* is never regarded as a marriage. The Tiv never used the term *er kwase*, meaning to marry a woman in connection with companionship. However, sometimes, children are born of such irregular unions. This is in fact one of the social evils of the companionship that the *Kparev* people resist vehemently.

Other parts of Tiv have the same practice with some variations. In *Masev* and *Iharev* lands, it is of greater importance than in other parts of Tivland, and the ceremony connected with it is one of the biggest feasts in *Masev* and *Iharev*. The expression used in these areas is *wa ikyar* (to enter into companionship).

In formal days, if a girl reached puberty in *Masev* and *Iharev* and did not have a male companion at her home, she was laughed at as being not much of a woman. People would say that when she grew up, she was so unattractive that no man came near her. If a woman *wa ikyar* and breaks it off and marries, the friendship continues as in other clans. But in *Masev* and *Iharev*, if she becomes pregnant by her husband,

she must be brought to her natal home so that a fertility rite called *iee* (cleansing) will be performed on her to ensure a successful delivery. The day for the ceremony is a big occasion. On that day, there is a serious competition in dress, dancing, etc between the group of the male *ikyar* and that of the husband. During the ceremony, the woman stands with her *ikyar* and the husband is pushed into background throughout the ceremony, the matrilineal companion takes a more prominent place than of the husband of the woman (Tarbo 37).

An informant, Mama Angershishi Zugu revealed that she grew up when *Ikyar* existed and she participated in the practice. According to her, the main aim of *Ikyar* was to protect and prevent young girls who were of marriageable age from sexual abuse. It also served as a moral conduct to avoid mischief to youth in Masev land [Tivland] (Oral interview). Mama Zugu stressed that a young girl who was matured for *ikyar* was allowed to participate if found. *Ikyar* was not allowed in a distant relation which is a brother and sister relationship.

Mama Zugu further avers that, a young man would approach the parents of a girl and indicate interest, if approved, the young girl will be allowed to relate freely with the *Ikyar*, he can even take the young girl to his house for celebration. This feast was not done in form of real marriage; a token would be given to the parents indicating approval for the relationship. *Ikyar* would untie the snail shell on the young girl's neck through *Ingbianjov* priestess before he could have sexual intercourse with her. If found a virgin, the girl's parents would be compensated for the girl's virginity, pregnancy could occur during the *Ikyar* system but a child comes before real marriage then, it becomes the husband's but if she gives birth within the *Ikyar* period, then the child was given to *Ikyar*. Since *Ikyar* regarded the girl as his sister, he had the responsibility of looking for a good husband for her.

There was heavy celebration when a girl who entered *Ikyar* was to be given out in marriage. It was also the responsibility of the *Ikyar* to provide all the materials needed for the marriage. The celebration was done in form of *iee* (cleansing). On the day of *Iee*, the young girls who grew up without *ikyar* were laughed at as not been attractive enough to have *Ikyar*. A local gin called *burukutu* was brewed within ten days and on the ninth day, the celebration commenced until the tenth day when women would queue up on a single line dancing with their tails. Mama Shishi demonstrated with the song thus:

Tiv:

Ayam aguru oo...

Ayam gba van ve...

Translation

A Leopard of terror ...

A Leopoard is coming now...

This type of songs were never sang during cultural ceremonies and celebrations such as traditional marriage, cultural masquerade, dance competitions, war processions, coronation of a traditional king including the Tiv paramount ruler etc. When the figure of interest or concern is about to appear in the public square of the ceremony or festival, when such a song is sang, the figure of interest such as a bridegroom, a king, a masquerade, a warlord or any related figure would now appear in the presence of the gathering.

The young girl and her *Ikyar* appeared in their best attire and displayed themselves in the presence of the gathering; afterwards, she was given to the husband. While in the husband's home, she was expected to have children and if the children were not forthcoming, it was reported to the parents and oracles consulted on the discovering that either the *Ikyoor* was not properly untied or cleansing was not well

done. It thus, became the responsibility of the *Ikyar* to provide a chicken for final cleansing to put the girl right (oral interview).

Almost all Tivland, the gerontocracy does not approve of the companionship, but it has always been tolerated by few. There are reasons for the disapproval accordign to Tarbo.

Plate V: Mama Angershishi Zugu posed for a photograph after interview with the researcher



Source: Field experience at Shanna village, Gwer East LGA on 29/01/2018

Social organisation: In Tiv social organisation, much emphasis is laid on exogamy. Marriage is not allowed within certain kinship groups such as *ingol* (sister) unit. Although new exogamous sections are coming into existence, the principles on which Tiv exogamy is based remain fundamental and permanent. Companionship is never intended to be permanent and when the woman breaks away from it and marries, the husband regards the *ikyar* of his wife as a person who spoils his wife that is a seducer. There are innumerable court cases which are connected with this practice. Murders also have been committed for this reason. The complications in Tiv marriage very often give rise to bitter feelings rather than amicable relationships between the communities concerned. Therefore, Tiv elders prefer a marriage from a distant clan to one within the same kinship group (37).

Religion: In traditional Tiv religion, there are some *akombo* which must be performed on one and for one by the maternal agnates; most of these fertility *akombo* such as Ihambe-ichigh of the mother's group. Some traditional Tiv mystical administrative instruments such as Imborivungu and poor- skulls are classified. Some belong to the patrilineal lineage while others to the materilocal lineage. It is considered dangerous for anybody to handle both. Since companionship is carried out within an *akombo* unit, the children of such unions would have the same *ityo* and *igba* and would consequently be in a confused situation. These were among the reasons why the Tiv did not have exchange marriage within an *akombo* unit.

Political and Legal reasons: Among the Tiv, a person has no rights in his matrilineal lineage. He may live there for protection but for political matters, he is called *wankwase* (a woman's child) an expression of contempt according to Tiv custom. If one's mother is from a distant clan, one enjoys membership of larger and stronger distant paternal and maternal groups. If a man's parents are from the same exogamic

group, he will have no distant *ityo* and *igba* and his rights will be very limited. Even though some few people are of the view that with the changes in Tiv social and political structures, the condition of the children of companionship has improved, yet they are treated with contempt.

With the above discussion in mind, the Tiv in general, are of the opinion that keeping of one's virginity until real marriage is always the best option. Tiv customs according to Tarbo, companionship is a disfigurement of marriage as it is a breach of exogamy. Companionship is in all respects, contrary to the Tiv customary marriage since it is carried out against the authority of the Tiv gerontocracy. It upsets social order because it is entered into a defiance of the Tiv gerontocracy. *Ikyar* in its present form is an abuse of matrimony because it produces children whose social and legal status is always insecure (37). From the foregoing, it is apparent to state here that, this is why the Tiv society encouraged the preservation of virginity of young girls before marriage. To the Tiv traditional thought system, virginity if not preserved, could lead to issues such as prostitution, breakages of marriage, etc.

Prostitution: In the past, norms on sexuality among the Tiv people were respected and strictly adhered to in the Tiv traditional society. As a result, unfaithfulness between the spouses was untraditional and a taboo as observed by Dzugba:

In classical Tiv society, for the integrity of the family in general and of the girl in particular the new wife was measured by the virginity of the newly married woman as she was expected to remain as a virgin before getting married... As an extremely important aspect of the institution of marriage in Tiv society, virginity was seen as the basis for marital faithfulness and obedience on the part of the woman, these benefits doubled if the husband also was someone who had never had sex before marriage (*On the Tiv of Central...* 112-113).

It is unfortunate that the society of today pays no allegiance to these traditional norms of morality. Our women nowadays abuse their bodies for money. These are seriously

lacking in moral upbringing and leadership by example especially on sexual matters. As a result, they have both taken to sexual gratification as a pass time (Akinniyi 8). The Tiv society has become hot spots for body marketing and as such prostitution has gained social acceptance both from parents and among the civilized dwellers of these areas. This ugly trend indicates that if the Tiv encourage the preservation of virginity, the issue of prostitution will be reduced or minimised.

Breakages of Marriages: The Tiv society never witnessed cases of breakages of marriages as it is done nowadays. According to Ayam, Ibunde and Torkwuase Tserva, with the increasing cases of breakages in marriage, both men and women are complaining. The men complain about girls and the women complain about the men. Many people say that it is difficult to get a faithful wife these days, and yet the women say the same thing about the men (Oral Interview).

Similarly, Ayangahungur Adema and Ikpayagh Antembe noted that since their marriage, they have never ran to their parents, problems normally come in, but the husbands always settle such problems together. He believes that he was the one that disvirgined her and has a soft spot for her. She also noted that marriage is preserved through endurance, perseverance and tolerance (Oral Interview).

Salae pointed out the importance of preserving virginity in the following words:

While our times have seen growing acceptance of extramarital pregnancy, it has not and cannot erase the sense of shame and inconvenience that it brings to most parents, including the parents of those involved. One solution commonly resorted to is abortion, while the dangers of the operation have diminished; it still carries physical risks and psychological effects, especially the latter (51).

One of the greatest mysteries is the gift of life. No one can explain how he came into existence. This is the reason why we should look at the life in us as the most valuable thing of all human values and as such it is demanded of every human being to

preserve and protect life whenever such responsibility is placed before us. From time immemorial humanity had tried to uphold that severity of human life, but today that has been eroded. It is common practice to eliminate life even the young people kill defenceless lives in the range of abortion. Among all the disturbing moral questions, abortion is dangerous, this is because, the issue of abortion is between life and death. Concerning life and death, God has said many things provoking thoughts, thus abortion is not only an evil against the fetus or the unborn, to the society or humanity also to God. Therefore abortion is not acceptable not only to unmarried even the married. The unmarried must not just abort but also maintain their virginity until marriage to the glory of God.

As Ikpaor Tyough, Ngumom Shiwua, Kyurtar Ver, Ashi Torkigh and Mama Adugh Kpamnande rightly pointed out that in the past, the Tiv had a special way of preserving and protecting virginity as a girl child was considered a valuable asset that needs to be protected so that she could be worth buying (Oral interview). Hunde Yarkwan and Ihungwa Yua pointed out that the perforation of a wrapper at the centre from the son-in law to his mother-in law was an indication that the newly married girl was not found to be a virgin and as such the perforated wrapper shows the infidelity of her daughter. It was a shame and humiliation to the entire family. The reputation of the girl was at stake before her husband and others.

In Tivland, a lot of importance was placed on the preservation of virginity by women. Mama Chombo Ikyuve, Alueshimana Tyovenda, Ashekuma Tombowua and Ashiamar Ornguduem had similar view, when they got married to their husbands; their mothers were given new wrappers without a hole in the centre, signifying their virginity. They noted that their mothers' age group held them in high esteem for

imbibing good moral values in them. Virginity was highly valued, honoured and appreciated in Tiv (Oral interview).

4.2 HEALTH ISSUES IN PRE-MARITAL SEX

Pre-marital sex is associated with a number of health issues; most importantly it facilitates the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, chancroid, genital warts, herpes and HIV/AIDS. Ajiki opines that 80 percent of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS transmission is spread through sexual intercourse (276). According to Ajiki, even though a number of factors increase the spread of this epidemic, the care causative factor includes pre-marital sex (276).

In support of the above statement, Afa maintains that disease and subsequent death accompany promiscuous and unsanitary sex and pre-marital sex is not left out. He goes ahead to discuss diseases that can be contracted by this act. He mentions gonorrhoea, syphilis, hepatitis C and B, HIV/AIDS, Chlamydia, and scabies mites (qtd. in Cameroun 50). This can affect the health cases; it can even cause some psychological dysfunction because of the social rejection that infected persons have in the society.

Sexually transmitted disease has many side effects which have affected the youths today both emotionally and physically. Sexually transmitted infections are easily spread when human beings are sexually active and have multiple sexual partners which is a common trend among the youths, and these sexual infections have posed devastating effects on one's physical and emotional health. The danger of HIV/AIDS and other transmitted disease are real. Because many STDs exhibit no outward symptoms, an infected person may be unaware, but contagious; nevertheless this AIDS virus can incubate for more than ten years before the infected persons or

individual test positive. Yet the person can transmit the virus all along. More so, when two people are involved in intercourse, each also is, in a sense, having sex with partners in life, so the more sexual contact one has, the higher the risk of contracting STDs. The sexual revolution that swept America during the 1960s is now beginning to encounter problems.

Liberation has brought in its train new epidemics of sexually transmitted diseases (Ehioghae 187). It has been estimated, for example, that as many as 20 million Americans now suffer from recurrent genital herpes for which no cure has been found. A striking relationship has been drawn between cervical cancer and promiscuous intercourse. The younger the woman is at the first intercourse the more frequently she engages in it and the greater the number of partners, the higher the risk of contracting cervical cancer. One can therefore infer that these reports reflect the reality in Nigeria in general and the Tiv in particular where pre-marital sex and promiscuity seem to be the norm for many young people. Other sexually transmitted diseases that may be contracted through pre-marital sex, gonorrhoea and syphilis, a young lady can transmit the infection to the unborn baby when she gets pregnant. Nancy van Pelt observes that “these diseases spread from person to person almost exclusively through sexual intercourse” (qtd. in Ehioghae 189). Often it takes just one infected person to spread it to many others. This scenario is equally true for the much dreaded HIV/AIDs scourge. It is estimated that about 29 million Africans now live with the virus and one-third of these infected are aged between 15-24 years, especially young women. To date, scientific researches demonstrate that the virus for HIV/AIDs pandemic is in most cases spread through sexual intercourse. It is frightening to realise that, today, HIV is becoming a teen disease, every year HIV finds younger victims. Soon most HIV may be caught during the teen years (Ehioghae 188).

This has probably informed the message of abstinence that is frequently sent to mobile phone users. The message is simply “to abstain from sex until the right time”. The right time of course is marriage. Also the message “zip up: sex is worth waiting for” could be seen on many bill boards, especially near tertiary institutions across the nation. Regardless of these precautions, so many teenage boys and girls engage in premarital sex with the argument that “I can do whatever I want with my body, so long as it does not hurt anybody”. Will somebody not be hurt if pre-marital sex is freely indulged? With the spectre of HIV/AIDs shattering the dreams and aspirations of young people and decimating millions, premarital sex cannot be an innocuous act. Besides guilt and shame and venereal disease often associated with pre-marital sex, there is also the incidence of unwanted pregnancies leading to ugly stories of babies thrown into gutters or latrines by teenagers. These are ugly scenarios. To add, psychological disasters, such as impotence in the male and frigidity in the female, deep rooted unfaithfulness on the part of one or both partners, have also been traced to pre-marital sex. Kubo corroborates:

While our times have seen growing acceptance of extra-marital pregnancy, it has not and cannot erase the sense of impropriety, shame and inconvenience that it brings to most parents, including the parents of these involved. One solution commonly resorted to is abortion. While the dangers of operation have diminished it still carries physical risks and psychological effects (qtd. in Ehioghae 188).

When the walls of chastity have been broken by pre-marital intercourse the lure to prostitution under certain conditions becomes irresistible. This calls for chastity, which is the only virtue to avoid the consequences of illicit sex.

With the analysis of various perspectives on the preservation of virginity in Tiv society in this chapter, it becomes clearer when the study launches into the religio-cultural importance of *ikyôôr* in the preservation of virginity in Tiv society.

4.3 THE MORAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH *IKYÔÔR* IN TIV

Morality has remained the greatest factor in the growth of African societies in general and the Tiv in particular. This fact is so glaring in the society as can be seen in the people's culture and religion. The Tiv believe that morality or moral codes have been given to man by the supernatural God. When God created man, He gave him the moral capacity of knowing, thinking, reasoning, willing, deciding, choosing and exercise of freedom (Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 212). It is from the heart that thought, motives and intentions arise. Thus the heart is responsible for moral decisions and actions.

Human beings have always been governed by some set of ideas, based on what is good or bad. In other words, every human society has behaviours that are considered good and responsible. Such moral values have always been kept in the forefront of human considerations, particularly when the various expectations of both individual and corporate organisations that constitute the society have to do with behavioural patterns and consequences of action which invariably make for harmonious, stable and peaceful communal life. Though societies across the globe hold certain moral actions as acceptable or unacceptable, desirable or undesirable, there are areas of morals that are universal. For instance, the ethical imperative of 'thou shall not kill' is society embrative. There is virtually no society where respect for human life is not held in high esteem. Morality for the Africans is, therefore, tied to the consciousness of right conduct by reason of which things are accepted as well as denied as they affect individuals, families, communities and infact all and sundry (Omoregbe 5).

It is in this regard that the Tiv had measures to guard female virginity by *Ikyôôr* cult. This was a check on sexual morality. *Ikyôôr* therefore restores human

dignity, sanctity and gives respect for human sexuality. *Ikyôôr* emerged as a result of complete observance of female virginity and served as a moral conduct to avoid mischief by the youth in Tiv. But the advent of modernisation has significantly destroyed the original meaning of *Ikyôôr*. *Ikyôôr* cult is, therefore, no longer valued or honoured in Tiv society today as people see those values, customs and taboos of *Ikyôôr* as something that has no place in our contemporary society. Based on this Makar has this to say, “immorality is a worldwide phenomenon on the increase as a result of colonial civilisation consequently, prostitution started among the Tiv” (432). When the walls of chastity have been broken down by pre-marital intercourse the lure to prostitution under certain condition becomes irresistible.

Since *Ikyôôr* as one of the core ethical values of Tiv has gone extinct because of western influence things have fallen apart. Consequently, sexually transmitted diseases, infidelity in marriage, unfruitful marriage, parental irresponsibility, extra-marital sex, divorce, etc are on the increase. This work therefore seeks to unveil the moral implications of the abandonment of *Ikyôôr* and proffer solutions or suggestions on the way forward.

The area of morality is another relevant avenue through which traditional African society uses to inform and reinforce in them the important idea and values of harmonious community living. Every society has its norms of acceptable behaviour, taboos and prohibitions.

Morality is considered to be a way of life, a set of principles regulating attitudes and behaviour of one towards his fellow men (Adewale 79). Looking at the Tiv, they are currently witnessing moral crises in all spheres of life. These crises of varying dimensions border squarely on unethical behaviour. It has taken diverse facets that have affected both the private and public life style of a Tiv man. The

society has lost the pride of virginity; pre-marital sex has taken the centre stage as most youth yield to it. Africans in general and the Tiv man in particular have forgotten about the core ethical values that were guides and guards of the society in the years past. The character of moral dignity is now relegated to the background. The crises of values has led the society into deeper troubles like vast spread of STDs, deceit, rape, infidelity, early deaths and a lot more. In fact, there is a general decline in discipline and morality. It has grown to a frightening proportion.

Sexual morality was cherished in Tiv traditional society. It was as a result of the above fact that the Tiv had measures to guard female virginity by *Ikyôôr* cult. This was a check on sexual morality. It also restored human dignity, sanctity and gave respect to human sexuality. This system has been abandoned, the reason being that, the seed of indiscipline is sown at home when youth disrespect their parents. From there, they grow to disobey constituted authorities. The high point is when they begin to behave immorally at home and in public. In other words, indiscipline and immorality start from home. Nowadays, parents have no time for their children's upbringing. Parents go out early in the morning and come back late at night. Some parents are drunkards and are quarrelsome. When children are not taught by parent concerning the values of the society, children fall in to the trap of modernisation with its exaltation of sexual licentiousness. Children are exposed to uncontrolled television programmes highly infested with such exposition, children grow up to feel that unrestrained sexual exploits are wonderful and virginity is outdated. They exhibit many other bad characters not worth imitating. Therefore, the home influence is a great factor in moral decline.

This decline in moral values can be described as catastrophic. The Tiv society is moving towards sexual norms that give wider latitude for individual sexual

expression (*Awake* 4). This has led to the prevalence of immature parents and poor parenting which is pervading Tiv society. Morality is no longer taken serious since parents are not ready to discipline their children in the right direction. The taboos and sanctions in our Tiv society are no longer taken serious. That is why Okafor opined that:

The ancient Africa was far from being an abode of laissez-fair morality. There was strict moral principles and determined code of conduct. Customs laid down the code of law which established the nature of right doings and customs established penalties and taboos male factors (22).

Moral sanctions were taken serious and were truly effective; this can be seen clearly in the *Ikyôôr* cult, where the Tiv had the *Ikyôôr* cult which was a serious traditional practice that was responsible for the observance of virginity among the unmarried girls. The cult was developed to curtail certain ramifications of sex with the young persons, since it was noted that the female virginity was cherished and taken in high esteem by our forefathers that is, when young girls were growing up, they were initiated into the *Ikyôôr* cult and hung on them the *Ikyôôr* emblem in order to guard their virginity until marriage. This cult was seen as a sort of taboo in order to scare people away from having sexual intercourse with the girls until they were legitimately married. If a man had sexual intercourse with a girl during the time she still had snail tied on her neck, he would become impotent and the cause of the girl's bareness would be attributed to this act.

Afaor quoting Shishima, has this to say:

Ikyôôr (Snail Shell) was usually placed on the neck of every virgin by an initiator of *Ikyôôr* to indicate that she had no knowledge of any man, she was still intact. Any man who deflowered or raped her became impotent. He was then obliged to perform the *saghakôôr* rite (losing the snail from the girl's neck) by providing a she goat to that effect. That goat was called *Ivo akôôr*. They also admitted that the *saghakôôr* was to be performed by the husband of the girl after the *kem* (bride price) was undertaken. A she virgin goat was used with every conviction that the girl was a virgin before marriage (73).

Plate VI: An Ikyôôr symbol hung in an Ate



Source: An *Ikyôôr* symbol hung in an Ate (Waapela, *Symbolism in Tiv Religion...* 88)

Amatso Taryina says *ikyôôr* cult served as a means of maintaining moral standard in the society. In the area of sexuality, he observed that in the past when young girls were initiated in to this cult, the young men would be afraid of going near them in order not to be sanctioned by the *Akombo ikyôôr* since all men valued their potency (oral interview). Thus, Udeh argues that:

Sexuality should be strictly under marriage even during the period of courtship, it is expected to be a time to plan the marriage not time for kissing each other. The intended couples should avoid meeting at odd hours and in questionable places possibly this should be in parents/relatives home with the door wide open to avoid calamity (25).

It is therefore important to note that sex is good, that the act by which spouses are united in an intimate and chaste manner is noble and dignified and that when exercised in a truly acceptable way, couples enrich each other mutually in a climate of joyous gratitude. The observation of virginity through the tying of *ikyôôr* therefore helps in the maintenance of stable family and a peaceful co-existence in the entire

society, so *ikyôôr* cult should be practised even in the 21st century because it can enhance our sexual moral standard. Since morality concerns itself with the “ought” the kind of person we should become, the kind of relationship we should have and the kind of community institution and national development we should promote. If the moral life of our youth has become a point of concern, like the relegation of virginity to the background, what standard of morality do we think they have set before themselves? And how can we correct what is wrong about it? Morality therefore calls for sensitivity to people as moral significant creatures who sometimes deserve esteem, compassion, support and we sometimes experience guilt, shame, vulnerability and despair. It involves appreciating those aspects or situations which are relevant to valuing persons and things. It requires understanding our emotions and commitment in a way that reveals their moral significance and that is responsive to the worth of others.

Appreciating, sensitivity, understanding, responsiveness are not mere ‘mean’ to doing the right thing, instead, they constitute our character, the moral substance of who we are. The notion of morality is, therefore, used to or in understanding the degrees or quality of an act, and to alarm the nature of the act with regard to the relation of the individual to this end, and more importantly, his relation to others. The function of morality is really more important in acts of interaction between man and his fellows, than man to himself because he is more prone to harm from his neighbour’s act than his own. Morality, therefore, presents the role for running human affairs, healthy, sound and stable society. It is inculcated in our daily living.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DISCONTINUITY OF *IKYÔÔR* AND ITS MORAL EFFECT ON THE TIV SOCIETY

5.1 THE MORAL LIFE OF THE TIV BEFORE THE ADVENT OF CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION

The pre-colonial Tiv society was wholly religious. Their way of life hinged on the matrix of religio-cultural heritage which are passed from generation to generation. The Tiv society was structured and organised in a way that everything revolved around the creation of harmony between man, nature and the world. To keep the relationship, the Tiv had traditional morality which was based purely on their customs and norms which one ought to do, such as respect for life and elders, honesty, chastity, fidelity, communalism, integrity, love, peace, justice, decent and dignified behaviour, mercifulness, sympathy, etc. Actions considered bad and to be avoided included murder, greed, cruelty, cowardice, fornication, adultery, disrespect, selfishness, injustice, theft, arrogance, etc. There were sanctions or condemnations attached to going contrary to the observance of the norms. The various deities and divinities in African beliefs in general, and the Tiv in particular, were regarded as custodians of the moral laws. According to Waapela, divinities served as police men and law-givers of public morality. They ensured the observance of the ethical codes, that is, taboos and prohibitions given by God regarded as the founder of morality. Thus, taboos and prohibitions instituted by the divinities to enhance morality cover a wide range aimed at protecting the community and, above all, fostering harmonious relationship with the divine world (*The Role of Divinities...*89). Therefore, morality is part and parcel of life, since it guides people in doing what is right and good for both their own sake and that of the community that helps people to do their duties to society and enjoy certain rights.

There are unseen forces which usually monitor people's ways of life in nature due to the unethical life which has to be set right by sacrifices and rituals to appease the ancestors. In Tiv traditional society, according to Waapela, a woman who commits adultery, for instance, sins against both her husband and the ancestral spirits of the husband's home. At the time of delivery, she might not be able to give birth to the child unless she confesses her immoral act. Most times sin may bring sickness in addition to unending trouble or disaster as punishment from the gods (*Symbolism in Tiv Religion...*89).

It is in this context of having sexual intercourse with another man where the husband has travelled on a journey that has given rise to the child's report which has been turned into a common and popular song among the Tiv. When the husband returned from his journey, the little boy told the father what he saw during the night when the father was away. He said to his father:

Baba-o baba, u yem ken zende, yô or nyôr shin iyou i iya yô, or yav sha gambe u iya, yô iya ka a ngbegha or, or a ngbegha iya, icha i gbe ga yo, iya vor gbedaa.

Father, father when you went on a journey, a man entered mother's house, the man lay on mother's bed, mother did push the man, the person also pushed mother. After a while, mother lay down very tired (Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 134).

The above song clearly shows immorality was not accepted in Tivland and even a little child could report to the father the infidelity of the mother which would eventually lead to the appeasement of the gods without which there could be disaster. This could bring stigma on the woman and she would abstain from such act subsequently. There was sanity in the pre-colonial Tiv society, since right actions also promoted equilibrium in the cosmic order.

Based on the above, the traditional Tiv society had it as a duty to train their daughters before giving them out in marriage. This training was necessary to prevent them from having both pre-marital and extra-marital affairs. In doing this, the Tiv had *Ikyôôr* cult as a measure to guard female virginity. This was a check on sexual morality. It also restored human dignity, sanctity and gave respect for sexuality. As Boh puts:

Ikyôôr tradition was a wonderful custom engineered and ordained by the *ingbianjôv* priestess to preserve the purity of the female child. The female child in every family once she became of age was taken to *Ingbianjôv* priestess where a snail (shell). *Ikyôôr* would be tied around her neck to serve as a reminder and warning to her and the strong he-goats eager to deflower her innocence. Once sanctified, the girl was to stay pure and free from any carnal knowledge of a man until she got married, when the snail was untied from her neck by the priestess. That way, a girl's purity was preserved and her marriage honoured (3-4).

The unmarried girls wore *Ikyôôr* shell on their necks to scare men away from engaging in any sexual contact with them. This symbolic sexual prohibition (*Yange Ikyôôr*) was considered pure. Any illegal carnal knowledge of the girl attracted immediate punishment until appropriate rituals were initiated (Torkula, *Traditional Institution of marriage...* 46). If the virginity was broken before marriage, the husband would send a perforated cloth showing the girl's father the infidelity of his daughter. It was a serious violation and shame not only to the ancestors but also to the living members of the community. A faithful girl who is discovered to be undefiled at marriage was not only the pride of the parents but also that of the larger community since chastity before and after marriage was cherished in Tiv traditional society.

Moral behaviours in Tiv were regulated by customs, traditions, and norms which were community oriented. There were sanctions attached to going contrary to them. The Tiv traditional society was stable because of the high moral standard.

5.2 THE TIV SOCIETY AT PRESENT

The contemporary Tiv society has metamorphosed into an alien culture which is completely different from the pre-colonial Tiv society. The moral values are gradually declining. According to Gbor, “the highly cherished cultural values no longer have a dominant position in governing Tiv behaviour, other considerations such as position and wealth have taken the central position in determining human actions in Tiv society” (*The Concept of Culture and Tiv...34*).

Money and position were not considered very important values in Tiv society, but money has now become the most cherished value, and morality of one’s action does not matter. Most Tiv can do anything in the quest for money without putting into consideration the morality of their behaviour because only those who have money are recognised. Therefore, there is excessive and incessant greed for money today which was not the case with the pre-colonial Tiv society.

Most of the offences which the Tiv regarded as serious are being ignored and looked down by the police, vigilante groups and modern courts. For instance, the violation of taboos such as incest, rape, pre-marital sex and extramarital affairs are treated as non-issues before the law courts. Though some may be regarded as crimes yet much emphasis is not placed on them as would have been done by the Tiv traditional society in the pre-colonial time (Ityohee 85).

The pre-colonial Tiv society’s communalistic living has been replaced by individualism. Their deep egalitarian social base has been abandoned. The Tiv elders who were the promoters and custodians of ethical values are no longer living up to expectations; rather some elders are promoting immorality as they go into hotels with “their daughters” to satisfy themselves sexually in the name of girl friends. The young girls on the other hand accept men old enough to be their fathers in the name of

money. Going by this, taboos, prohibitions and laws have no effects on the contemporary Tiv society because there is moral laxity and neglect of traditional norms.

According to Adega, the development of physical skills, aspects of Tiv culture such as dances have been neglected today. Tiv dances such as *Swange*, *Gbanyi/Gbangi*, *Shen*, *Ngyough*, *Anchenakupa*, are no longer cherished or learnt by Tiv youth. The in-thing now is hip-hop, rap, rhythm and blues which do nothing but promote immorality and corruption of the mind. The songs are full of lyrics based on erotic love and the artistes are dressed almost half naked, sag their trousers (49). Character training which is the main objective of traditional education in Tiv society is no longer aggressively pursued. The virtues of honesty, humility, perseverance, courage and the likes are no longer cherished values. It was uncommon for the Tiv to tell lies even in the face of danger or to cause wilful damage to a neighbour's property, it was, therefore, not uncommon to see one redirect the stem of a yam plant that crossed the road so that passers-by would not step on it. But nowadays, young educated Tiv arrogantly talks to elders and publicly abuses and swears at them in disrespectful manner (50). In addition, Adega says:

Morality which is the hub of traditional education is no longer en-vogue; as a result, boys and girls do whatever appeals to them. Pre-marital sex is no longer a crime and girls break their virginity without an iota of regret, all in the name of trying to meet up peer expectations. Tiv youth nowadays observe a destructive cliché *ka wea tsor hyande u zenden aveker* (when you choose a field for cultivation in the next cropping season, you start weeding it immediately) (52).

This makes youths to sleep with each other with recklessness without raising an eyebrow. In this age of HIV/AIDS, STDs and other venereal diseases, the above scenario is better imagined than said.

5.3 CHANGE AND DISCONTINUITY OF THE *IKYÔÔR* CULT

Western education which brought Western civilisation in Africa in general and the Tiv in particular was the child of Christianity. The Christian missionaries who came to Africa had dual purposes: to evangelise Africa and to introduce the western civilisation, which is the product of the European Culture just as every other civilisation is a product of a particular culture. This western culture and civilisation was imposed on the Africans in form of Christianity and Western education which go hand in hand. The missionaries, as it were, went ahead of the European colonialists preparing their way by softening and weakening the minds of the Africans and breaking their traditional set ups leaving them without any cursive factor to fight effectively against foreign dominations.

The Christian missionaries and their colonialists challenged some aspects of African culture, calling the African way of life and practices many disgusting names such as pagan, archaic, etc. Africans who went to missionary or European schools were thus indoctrinated and therefore brainwashed, which greatly informed their unappreciative attitudes towards everything in Africa or what they call native ways. The colonial administrators, on their part, made forceful means to ensure that African way of life was totally abandoned and any resistance was subjected to severe torture. There was forceful conscription into forced labour without pay and under bad conditions. In this way the traditional culture gradually gave way to Western civilisation or European and colonial administration of the missionary's culture. This disposition of the missionaries and colonial administration was observed by Fafunwa that: "a good citizen in Nigeria and elsewhere between 1950 and 1960 meant one, who was African by blood, Christian by religion and British or French in culture and intellect...." (52). The discontinuity of the *Ikyôôr* cult and other cultural values started

when the people embraced Christianity and could not allow their daughters to be initiated by the *Ingbian-jov* priestess into *Ikyôôr* cult because they were brainwashed that *Ikyôôr* was a pagan practice, something not be practiced by Christians.

According to Dzurgba, the European and American Christians were obedient to the Great commission of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to international communities (Mark 16: 15). The acceptance of that divine injunction brought about the inception and the development of Christian missions (*On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...*69). Sudan United Mission (S.U.M) was founded in Europe. It was founded by Karl W. Kumm who was born on October 19, 1874 in the town of Osterode in Honover province, Germany. Sudan United Mission was an interdenominational and international organisation. On November 27, the committee of Sudan United Mission held its first meeting in London. The S.U.M committee decided to send missionaries to Nigeria for an exploration of the land and its people. Four men were selected and commissioned. They were Dr. Karl W. Kumm, Dr. Balema J. G. Burt and J. Lowry Maxwell, Dr. Karl Kumm was the leader of that mission expedition. The four men began their journey on July 23, 1904 (qtd. in Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 71-72).

Dr. Karl Kumm, Dr. Batema, I. G. Burt and J. I Maxwell arrived on the coast of Nigeria on August 10, 1904. They travelled up the River Niger to Lokoja. Dr. Karl Kumm left other missionaries at Lokoja and travelled to Zungeru. Because of the unhealthy environmental conditions of Lokoja, the capital of the protectorate of the Northern Nigeria had been moved to Zungeru. Sir Frederick Lugard, who had worked successfully in conquering Uganda in East Africa as well as South Africa until 1895, had been appointed a British High Commissioner in 1901 to conquer the protectorate of Northern Nigeria for British occupation. It was at that time that Colonel Kembell

and Colonel Moorland conquered Northern Nigeria. Sir Frederick Lugard was in Zungeru at that time. Dr. Karl Kumm went to Zungeru to seek for a permission to establish a mission station in Northern Nigeria. Sir Frederick Lugard granted them permission to set up a mission station at Wase, Lugard was in Zungeru until the capital of Northern Nigeria was later moved to Kaduna (qtd. in Dzugba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 73). Dr. Karl Kumm returned from Zungeru to Lokoja and joined his colleagues, Dr. Batema, J. G. Burt and J. Lowry Maxwell from Lokoja, they travelled up River Benue and came to Abinsi, a town in Tiv land. From Abinsi, they travelled to Ibi and arrived there on September 3, 1904. Shortly after, they left Ibi and headed for Wase, Dr. Batema became ill. He suffered from appendicitis. He had to return to Ibi and from there to Britain because he needed an operation, but there was no hospital. There was not even a clinic: there was no airway to fly him to Britain. Thus, he travelled by boat down River Benue and River Niger to the coast of Atlantic Ocean. He travelled to Britain by means of a steamship. Kumm, Burt and Maxwell continued their journey and arrived Wase on October 8, 1904. They established the first SUM station in Wase.

Dr. Kumm returned to Britain at the beginning of 1905. He engaged in an international campaign to enlist the interest and support of Christians and churches. He travelled to the United States, Canada, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, Tanzania and South Africa. As a result, many branches of SUM were formed. For example, British branch in Britain, Danish branch in Denmark and Christian Reformed Church branch in the United States. The British branch coordinated the activities of SUM branches. That was because the British branch of S.U.M original initiator of SUM and most of its branches worked in the countries which were ruled by British colonial regimes (*On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...*73).

Christian Reformed Church branch had the government's permission to work among the Jukun and Tiv. CRC branch had begun to work among the Jukun and hoped to expand their work gradually into Tivland. However, CRC branch found out that a combination had to restrict itself in Jukunland. An occasion to do so came in 1910. In 1910, Vincent H. Hosking attended a general conference of all protestant missions in Northern Nigeria. The conference was held in Lokoja.

At Lokoja conference, protestant missions decided that a mission had to work among a people whose population was not less than 50,000. Because of this decision South African branch had to leave the Mbula people to look for an ethnic group since the population of the Mbula was only 8,000 people. It was at that time that Christian Reformed Church branch handed over Tivland to South African branch of SUM. Mr. Guinter, the superintendent of Christian Reformed Church branch, wrote a letter to permit South African branch to work among the Tiv. Having received Mr. Guinter's letter on February 8, 1911, Rev. George Botha left the Mbula to travel to Wukari on horseback. Fourteen days later, he arrived in Wukari on February 2, 1911. Wukari the political headquarters of Jukun people was also the headquarters of SUM (CRC of America). Mr. Guinter and Rev. Botha settled the matter. The Tivland was handed over to South African branch SUM. On March 3, 1911, Botha had gone on leave to South Africa, the duty of establishing the first Christian mission station among the Tiv fell on Carl Zimmerman (qtd. in Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 75). It was the first Christian Mission station because there had been no other Christian mission in Tivland. Thus, South African branch of Sudan United Mission was the first Christian mission to establish itself in Tivland.

The British colonial government in Northern Nigeria gave the permission that a mission station be built to the East of River Katsina-Ala. The colonial government

felt that the east of River Katsina-Ala was sufficiently pacified by a military conquest. It may be borne in mind that Tivland was one of the communities that were last conquered by the colonial soldiers. Carl Zimmerman travelled from Wukari in Jukunland, on Horseback, to Chief Saai Utu's Village. He arrived on April 17, 1911. Horses and asses were used as means of travel in Jukunland and other parts of Northern Nigeria, but horses and asses were not common domestic animals among the Tiv. Tiv who had succeeded in life used to buy horses from Wukari to enhance their personal greatness, honour and prestige. Chieftaincy was a colonial innovation in Tivland. Sir Frederick Lugard's indirect rule through the chiefs was imperative for all communities in Northern Nigeria. Thus, chieftaincy was imposed upon the Tiv. Thus, Saai Utu was the chief of Shitile. His village was on the border between Tivland and Jukunland. It was the extremity of the Eastern end of Tivland. Hosking joined Carl Zimmerman in September 1911, and November, Mr. A.S. Judd arrived from South Africa. He joined them at Saai Utu's village. A mission station was established at Saai village. A primary school was also established. Apart from providing western education, SUM Primary School Saai, was a means of effective evangelization. In that year, 1911, Saai's wife gave birth to a baby boy. He was named Isholibo which means (sin). This indicates that "Christianity had immediate social implications for the Tiv (Dzurgba 75).

The Tiv, in spite of their willingness and co-operation found Christian worship to be alien, strange and funny. Rev. Casaleggio complained that:

... it was not easy to preach the gospel to the Tiv. Prayer was totally strange to them. When the White Missionists called upon them to close their eyes for a prayer, it was usually a matter of laughter: They peeped because they could not guess what the Missionist would do when their eyes would have been closed. Their attention was easily diverted. A passer-by was greeted loudly by a member of the congregation. Sometimes an elderly man or woman could loudly order a child to fetch and light a pipe for him or her. He or she smoked

the pipe during the service. Rev Casaleggio saw that behaviour as an opposition (qtd. in Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 76).

For some people this behaviour was seen as prejudice but Dzurgba says:

It was a matter of newness of the Christian worship to the Tiv. Its change from traditional religious worship to a Christian worship needed enough time for a proper understanding on the part of the Tiv people. This is because a religious conversion involves not only beliefs and ethics, but also social reorientation of the people. African social orientation was different from European social orientation (*On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 76).

In the first annual report of Saai mission station in 1911, however, Carl Zimmerman, Hosking and A.S. Judd expressed their joy because of the success Saai mission station had made in one year. It had made three converts, namely Akiga, Alam and Iverkpen. Buxton in 1841 however argued that, to change African social conditions for the better needed not only Christianity, but also exploration, trade, commerce, education, agriculture, medicine, industries and science. Through these means, trust and confidence between man and man would be inspired and a new civilisation would advance naturally. Christianity could operate as one of the agencies of that happy change (Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...* 76).

This became the case in which the missionaries used in Tivland through their contributions ranging from Western education and medicine, care of motherless children, promotion of modern business, background of political education, inculcation of Christian ethics, cultural transformation and conversion of persons.

Since conversion is a process of changing from one religion to another religion or one religious belief to another religious belief through Church establishment and evangelism, the Tiv were converted from traditional religion to Christianity. In Tiv traditional religion, the people had one supreme deity called *Aondo* and many small deities called *Akombo* as plural, while one was *kombo*. These deities together were referred to by the white people as polytheism. The Tiv were converted to Christianity

to which Europeans referred to as monotheism. The religiously changed persons were called converts or Christians who adopted European names recorded in the Holy Bible and Church records. Thus, there were Mathew, Luke, Mark, John, Paul, Peter, Stephen, Elijah, Moses, Joshua, Mary, Elizabeth, Hannah, Rebacca and others. The conversion changed the people's attitudes towards social, economic, political, scientific and technological ideals. The conversion of persons to Christian religion changed the people's taste, feeling or emotion, perception, thought, decision-making, choice making, mental orientation, general behaviour, and beliefs (Dzurgba, 20-22).

The above discussion shows clearly where the issue of the discontinuity of *Ikyôôr* cult and other cultural values started. People who embraced Christianity today cannot allow their daughters to be initiated by *Ingbian-Jov* priestess into *Ikyôôr* cult because they were brain washed and *Ikyôôr* was therefore seen as *Kwagh u Mbatsav man Akombo* (a thing of witch craft and idol worship). According to Gbenda, *Akombo* were used as intermediaries between man and the unseen forces as well as maintaining morality (181). These *Akombo* (unseen forces) usually monitor people's ways of life in nature due to unethical life which has to be set right by sacrifices and rituals to appease the ancestors and ultimately the super-sensible being called *Aondo* by the Tiv.

The mystical forces owed their existence from God who created the entire universe and is also in charge of certain departments of life. Gbenda noted that, Tiv traditional ethics like that of other Africans is based purely on their tradition, customs, norms and prohibitions of actions which one ought to do and those things considered bad to be avoided. The Tiv ethics is expressed in norms, which regulate relationships between individuals and social groups. There are sanctions or condemnations attached to going contrary to the observance of the norms (*African Theism...* 175).

Western civilisation was introduced in Nigeria through the Christian missionaries in the 19th century from the western part of the country. The missionaries spread their religion and culture to the hinterland using the river Niger and Benue. Through these channels they sailed from the Southern part of Nigeria to Gongola and eventually reached Tiv land in 1911, at Sai in the present Katsina-Ala local government area of Benue State. From that time till date, western civilisation by means of education and evangelisation is successfully integrated in the land. Western civilisation and education have caused a lot of changes among the Tiv in terms of beliefs and practices. The influence has made it in such a way that, there is little or no regard for the religious and cultural practices. The Tiv looked at western education as something that delivered them from the cultural restraints of religious practices and liberated them from cultural complexity which characterised the Tiv religion.

Christianity is the factor that traditional practitioners have frowned at most, because of its disassociation with traditional values and practices. It is the major reason why *Ikyôôr* cult is no longer valued or honoured in Tiv society today, and has successfully destroyed the original meaning of *Ikyôôr* which is just to bring sanity to the society. People who embraced Christianity cannot allow their daughters to be initiated by *Ingbian-jov* priestess into this cult because the cult is seen as *kwagh u mbatsav man Akombo* (a thing of witchcraft and idol worship).

Western education which was the desire of every Tiv man to attain or send his children, has posed another challenge to the continuation of the cult. In the past, children grew up with their parents, and they received training and due punishments for actions that were not accepted in the family so as to achieve a reasonable upbringing. As a result, children strived to avoid things that incurred punishments. This inspired and encouraged the parents to willingly take their daughters to be

initiated into *Ikyôôr* cult knowing fully well that the children had good discipline and could avoid crossing the boundaries. With the advent of western education and desire to attain it has created a lacuna between parents and children. Children travel a distance just for the sake of education. Parents nowadays cannot tell what the child is going through in school; they have neglected their parental responsibility as has been described by Ohaeri:

Modern day parents do not have time for their kids to the extent that the children look at their nannies as their mothers and address them as such while calling their real mothers aunties. If these basic African moral precepts are not inculcated at home and school, where else do you think it can be inculcated? These failures of parents in their responsibility of inculcating African moral values have immensely contributed to the deterioration of African ethical values (51).

It is no doubt that the colonial rule was an imposition that unleashed a deadly blow to African ethical values and culture. The method of moral inculcating was initiated which resulted in the abandonment of traditional norms and values through a systematic depersonalisation of the African and paganisation of its moral and cultural values.

From the above it becomes clear how the European through the collaboration of the colonialists using the instrument of education and power respectively to surpass the African way of life and instead imposed the western civilisation of which has brought in notable changes on the African society in general and the Tiv in particular.

5.4 MORAL EFFECTS OF THE CHANGE

The introduction of western cultures, though not bad in itself but alien to Tiv culture, created unfavourable conditions which largely transformed the long cherished Tiv traditional values. So many things that were taboos became of less value to the society. Ancestors being the guardians of morality have been discarded. Unchastity which was a grievous crime in Tiv society now appears to be the order of the day.

Respect for elders is on the decline. Traditional hospitality and generosity which make each other his brother's keeper, is replaced by a new moral virtue (Ityohee 105). All adult members of any compound had the right to discipline any child that misbehaved when there was communal living, but Western influence has changed this system to individualism. Other virtues like honesty, truthfulness, hard work etc. are diminishing in Tiv society.

Respect for sexual morality is one of the most cherished Tiv values; however, the revolution which came as a result of Western civilisation has paved way for sexual immorality. Sexual immorality is, therefore, on the increase in Tiv society and it is also being promoted in the print and electronic media. The traditional society's code of conduct has been put asunder and the Tiv society, therefore, metamorphosed into an alien culture. This also affected the Tiv people in the areas of fidelity in marriage, fruitful marriage, integrity, honour, parental responsibility, etc.

Infidelity in Marriage

The phenomenon of infidelity has become common among the Tiv due to discontinuity in the practice of *Ikyôôr* cult. There is generally a decline in sexual chastity in Tiv. Consequently, both married and unmarried now engage in indiscriminate sexual activities against the cherished value of fidelity. The word fidelity originated in the 15th century through middle French and English. The Latin verb *fidere*, means "to trust". "*Fidere*" is also an English word associated with trust or faith, such as *fiducing* which means "of relating to or involving a confidence or trust".

Fidelity, loyalty, devotion and piety mean faithfulness to something to which one is bound by pledge or duty. Fidelity implies strict and continuity, faithfulness to something to which one has obligation, trust or duty for example, marital fidelity. Marital fidelity suggests refraining from sex with other partners the full extent of what

it means to be faithful in marriage ([www.merriamwebster.com](http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary)>*dictionary* 29th March 2016).

Fidelity in marriage is one of most important values in the African marriage institution in general and the Tiv in particular. Societies the world-over acknowledge this as a virtue. Asen points out that infidelity which consists in being unfaithful to each other in marital circle-having multiple sex partners in marriage is a vice that is capable of crumbling the whole institution of marriage. The consequences of which are abandonment of partners physically and emotionally as well as neglect of children (3).

A good marriage in Tiv was not the type explained above; it involved commitment, acceptance and mutual respect bounded together with love. Spouses set themselves apart from all others, and gave themselves exclusively to each other. A good marriage in Tiv was also based on the reciprocity principle. Partners, who have pledged to love each other (till death do us part) must work at it actively and continuously. There is no casual love or vacation written into the contract. Today, the world is in the grip of sexual revolution, sexual exploits, sexual prowess are recurring themes that bombard us through both the print and electronic media. Personal pleasure and self fulfillment are characteristics of the new morality. Infidelity is glamorised. The weakening of religious and social restraints, easy availability of sex, permissive legislation has all contributed to the rise in infidelity (<http://graceuniversity.edu/iip/2011/7/2016>). Spouses are not sincere to each other and this has affected the entire Tiv society. According to Nyiyongo, and Ejeh, (senior social welfare officers), “from 2000-2016 we have recorded not less than 50 cases of temporary separation in this office based on infidelity in marriage” (oral interview).

The view regarding fornication and adultery in Tiv society today is based on the declining roles of values like fidelity and chastity in the Tiv society. Fidelity and chastity were cherished values in Tiv culture. There were clear incest taboos that set the boundaries within which sexual relationships were allowed or sanctioned. According to Atuu, every breach of incest was sanctioned ranging from ritual burning to stigmatisation. There were also stiff sanctions that existed against rape and fornication (23). Each girl at puberty underwent the *Ikyôôr* (Snail shell) ritual to forestall rape and ensure chastity. In the event of rape or fornication, the ‘aggressor’ was required to appropriate the *Ikyôôr Akombo* (ritual of snail) without which she run the risk of persistent ill luck on one hand while on the other hand could have problems ranging from irregular menstrual cycles to inability to conceive (Tondo Ajai, oral interview). Based on the above fact, each woman was given the opportunity to confess whether she had been sexually violated so as to set the records straight and get the ‘culprit’ to propitiate the *Ikyôôr Akombo* (ritual of snail) and cleanse the woman before marriage.

The same level of faithfulness was expected of the woman at marriage. She was expected to abstain from both *Ijimba* (licentiousness) and *Idya* (adultery). Dzurgba says “adultery is a sexual intercourse between someone who is married and another person who is not his wife or her husband” (*On the Tiv of Central Nigeria...*127). Dzurgba emphasises that “since ancient times, *Idya* (adultery) has been a serious crime in Tiv society” (127). There existed stiff sanctions against infidelity and no man could violate the chastity of his neighbour’s wife and still expect the approval of the society since such violation was capable of destroying friendship and undermining *philia* love. Age grades had strict codes against members caught in compromising situations with the wives of other members. Culprits were

heavily fined and stigmatised. As a way of reinforcing sanctions against adultery, it was believed that if an adulterous person was wounded in a hunt or in a war, his friend or brother whose wife he had had an adulterous relationship with, attempted to help, instead of surviving, he would surely die. There was caution and everybody was careful, but today adultery is done in the public, infidelity in marriage is the order of the day, say Mama Afai Tsua and Jabi Agough (oral interview).

The level of infidelity in marriage is on the increase and this has affected couples so much so that most families separate upon discovery. This affects the children when their parents are not staying together because they receive training in two homes and it becomes difficult to monitor their actions. This gives most children the opportunity to misbehave or engage in social vices which in turn affects the society.

Unfruitful Marriage

The term marriage is a socially approved and legitimate sexual union between two or more individuals one of whom, at least, must be of the opposite sex. Marriage is expected to be a permanent sexual union. The parties to a marriage must be members of two different kin groups. The two kin groups have crucial implications for the success or failure of the marriage and the structuring of the family. In fact, the continuity of the marriage and the welfare of a kin group depends on how the kin group obtains spouses for the unmarried members or bachelors of their group from other groups. A kin group has a share in retaining some measure of control over its members after they have got married. Marriage begins with a public announcement and it is undertaken with some idea of permanence. Its contract spells out reciprocal rights and obligations or duties between spouses and their future children. The concept of marriage exists in all societies and it must be distinguished from temporary

sexual relationships which specifically resemble marriage. According Dzugba, marriage is a union of a man and a woman (husband and wife) (*Nom and Kwase*) (117). Fruitful simply means producing many useful results (OALDCE 479). It is a marriage that is functional and achieves the purpose and functions of marriage as it was intended.

Marriage is a divine institution which is recognised and respected all over the world, and it is practised based on social and religious norms in a particular society. The family takes its root from marriage thus making it of utmost significance in the world. There are values that are attached to this institution of marriage, and these values vary from one culture to another. Among the Tiv of central Nigeria, marriage has a crucial aim, which is procreation for the continuity of marriage. It was not an individual affair; it was the duty of the society to arrange for marriages and towards the sustenance and unity of marriage. The elders and relatives in traditional Tiv society worked together to ensure that people experience lasting marriages, and for this reason, divorce and broken marriages were checked.

There were a number of marriages that existed in Tiv, *Yam-Ishe* (exchange marriage), '*Kemkwase*' (Bride Price) and '*Ive*'. Over eighty percent of marriages in Tiv came from recommendations. Iyortyom says that the choice of a potential wife rested with the man, as any attempts made by the potential wife to admire her potential husband was seen as a violation of her womanhood, being termed as wayward and lustful (7). In agreement with the above statement, Nguzungwen Ku and Ashioron Gwer say a young girl who was close to her fiancé before marriage was stigmatised as a wayward girl (oral interview).

Before the marriage was finally consummated, courtship procedure came as a vital link. The climax of it was that the man and his kinsmen met the requirements

preferred on them by the girl's parents or brothers; a ceremony was initiated during which she was formally given out in marriage to her husband; the in-laws first held a session of traditional marriage rites with the husband's kinsmen. If all demands preferred were met, the turn of the mothers-in-law came when they presented their demands, after which the parents of the girl gave their last advice to the girl and then the man taking a new wife before they took leave of the girl.

When they finally arrived her matrimonial home, to herald their arrival, *angwe u yôôn* (a song is announced), says Ibunde Wayo, by one of the family members saying:

*Angwe kpee,
angwe, ka u ana”
Ka angwe u via,
via angwe ye
Nyam, nyam.*

Whose news is it?
It is the news of Mr. so and so.
It is the news of Mr. so and so.
This news involves heavy feasting with meat (Oral interview).

It is marriage of a new wife, the one who is to cook food for her husband and his people. The news vibrates sonorously! Sonorously!! Sonorously!!! With the announcement, other relatives and well wishers who are waiting for the arrival of the *kwase u he* (new wife) responded to the song with appropriate dance. They open the celebration of the arrival of the new wife with the mockery song of bachelors and their insatiable eating habits in order to spur other bachelors into marriage, says Zendeshima Akena:

*Or u kwa hembé yan a hungwa pepe, i ngbagh iyough me ya,
Or u kwa hembé yan, a hungwa pepe nahan a ngbagh agbo ve!
Or ukwa ye nyi? Ngbagh agbo ve!!(oral interview).*

The bachelor eats more than other people
He complains of hunger very early in the morning and asks for roasted water yam.
The bachelor eats a lot. Early in the morning he roasts water yam (oral interview).

The newly married wife was given the needed recognition; she in turn assumed responsibility as a house wife in her new home. There were a lot of expectations from her which included taking over the roles in the kitchen, fetching drinking water and most importantly engagement into sexual intercourse which will bring about children. Procreation was a very important aspect of marriage according to Ngizan Adingir and Ihyomo Amber. Barrenness was one of the reasons for unhappy married life, but there were few cases since barrenness is a natural thing (oral interview). Few cases of barrenness in Tiv were easily treated with traditional herbs (Mbaoron Uvia and Tondo Ajai, Oral interview).

The issue of barrenness in Tiv is a serious thing because the Tiv attach great importance to children than any other thing. A man's status is determined by the number of children he has, that is why even when one dies, the Tiv will say as Anshi rightly pointed, "*via kpe ga a or a or*" (he is not dead, he has, only metamorphosed) (*Ieren: An Introduction to Tiv Philo...*96). This explains why people divorce or go for a second wife if the first one has no child.

Western culture has done harm in the area of barrenness and divorce. There are more barren women and divorce cases than before because of Western influence. Family planning pills, in-plant, injections that can prevent pregnancies, and induced abortions have had negative effects on women than what used to be. The tradition of revering the institution of marriage in the Tiv society no longer holds today. In the past, marriage was very sacred and the question of divorce was looked upon as a disgrace to a family. If a divorce was contemplated, every member of the family

would try his/her best to see that such was averted. Today divorce does not mean anything to a lot of people. This has brought about many homes with some traumatised children. This has affected the stability of the entire Tiv society in the area of marriage and fruitful marriage.

The Moral Effect on Educational Institutions

Premarital sex poses a serious challenge in schools. Uzokwe is of the view that those engage in premarital sex in school hardly have enough time to concentrate on their school work. Some even go to the extent of seeking to sleep with teachers/lecturers in exchange for grades which they do not deserve (qtd in Anyam 86). This fact indicates that premarital sex encourages vices like bribery and corruption, examination malpractice, favouritism and possibly several others on many campuses in Nigeria and Tiv in particular. Thus, it is an impediment to sanity and discipline on most of our school campuses. Premarital and extramarital affairs have the capacity of destroying or hampering family life and morality in home. Parents who engage in extramarital affairs to make ends meet in their homes lose the moral leverage to insist that their children should lead chaste sexual lives. Once this moral authority is compromised, the children and wards in such a home follow in the same footsteps of the parents and in most cases all the vices that follow premarital and extramarital affairs like drug abuse, indecent dressing, truancy in school etc become the order of the day in such a home. Discipline becomes outcast in such a home and all manner of strife and chaos may become permanent guests (Anyam *Issues in Moral Philosophy*...85).

In traditional Tiv society, unwanted pregnancy, abortion and illegitimate children were frowned at. To preserve the virginity of a girl, such a girl would have *Ikyôôr* (Snail shell) tied around her neck. When she is getting ready for marriage, the

husband would untie the snail shell through the *Ingbianjov* priestess before taking her as wife.

Plate VII: Snail Shells used for Initiation into *Ikyôôr* Cult



Source: Field experience 18/06/2016

If the virginity was broken before marriage, the husband would send a perforated cloth showing the girl's father the infidelity of his daughter. It was a serious violation and shame not only to the ancestors but also living members of the entire community. A faithful girl who is discovered to be undefiled at marriage is not only the pride of the parents and family but that of the larger community. Hence chastity before marriage was highly cherished in Tiv traditional society. It is quite clear that chastity and fidelity were cherished values underlining the Tiv culture rite. Women who had lost their virginity still found husbands, but they were required to "confess" in order to propitiate the *Ikyôôr* rite (ritual of Snail) to cleanse them before they could settle down into the marriage.

Through modernisation young people have gained a considerable amount of freedom because of the poor economic positions of their parents and relations, all in the name of meeting the demands of the day. Wegh says "this turns to create a kind of economic opportunity for which the qualifications needed are not university degree but physical attraction, or good looks and the capacity to charm and captivate" (*Between Continuity...*80).

This shows clearly that western civilisation and education have caused a lot of changes among the Tiv in terms of their beliefs, practices and values. The influence has made it in such a way that, there is little or no regard for the cultural practices of the Tiv. Both men and women now look at Western education as something that delivered or liberated them from the Tiv cultural complexity. The Tiv who have in the past been very protective of their women no longer succeed in this task. The expanding influence of colonial civilisation brought about a new state of affairs in the modern Tiv society. The most cherished Tiv values are being regarded as something that has been overtaken by events. Pre-marital sex has now allowed the phenomenon

of unwanted pregnancies, induced abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, deaths due to abortion complications etc. to be high in Tivland. This was not the case when the Tiv cultural values were cherished and operative in the land.

Prostitution

Although prostitution is universal, it is generally disapproved in most societies. It does injury to the dignity of the person who engages in it, reducing the person to an instrument of sexual pleasure. It is sinful to engage in prostitution. According to Gagnor, prostitution is the granting to sexual access on a relatively indiscriminate basis for payment either in money or in goods, depending on the complexity of the local economic system (25). Prostitution in contemporary times has become a profession that is voluntarily ventured into by some people (Mikeson and Hanson 238-239).

According to Anyam, whatever the origins and causes of prostitution, it has been a social institution, throughout the recorded history of humankind (2). While in the years prior to the contact between the West and Benue in general and the Tiv in particular, the prevalence rate of prostitution was quite minimal, the story is different in contemporary times. It is now a booming business enterprise attracting a lot of young men and women. Young girls and women take to the streets now in the name of prostitution; this was uncommon in Tivland. Apeinem Kyura says, there was high moral standard in Tiv society, there was no prostitution in Tiv land until the Nigerian civil war of 1966 (Oral interview).

Following the counter coup of Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon which succeeded Aguiyi Ironsi in July, 1966 (Titus 23) there emerged series of crises in Nigeria which many people lost their lives. The situation has been captured thus:

During the first weekend of October violence again broke out in the North... against Igbo and other Easterners, each in the region rapidly inflamed

passions, and before the weekend was over, somewhere between 5,000 and 50,000 people had been killed (Titus 36-37).

Upon this, Lt. Col. Ojukwu developed a self-standing Military Command Headquarters in Enugu and on 30th May, 1967, he made a broadcast declaring the birth of a New Republic of Biafra. This resulted to a national Civil War in which many Tiv were conscripted willingly and forcefully into the Nigerian Army to participate in the war to keep Nigeria one. Most of these soldiers were married men who left their wives for the war and got killed in the war and never returned. The resultant effect was that most of the women experienced hard times that made them succumb to so many unwholesome activities including prostitution. Gbakaan Hwende is of the view that the civil war had marked the beginning of prostitution among the Tiv women (Oral interview). Many unmarried and married women left their families and headed to the east to “*ngohol agbo shin inya*” (Collect bullets down). This expression was used to disguise and identify the category of women that went into prostitution with the Nigerian soldiers that were in the battle zone.

This was a common practice among most of the Tiv women especially those in areas that border with the eastern part of Nigeria. The outcome was that women contaminated themselves sexually with the soldiers, some got married while some had pregnancies for which the men refused to bear responsibility, and some did not even know who impregnated them because of indiscriminate sex. Another issue is that women who went to “*ngohol agbo*” (collect bullets) came back to corrupt other women owing to their experiences. They became hardened, stubborn and indisciplined outrightly refusing to be loyal and law abiding to their husbands, families and the society at large. Some women came back and recruited others into professional prostitution, hence the introduction of prostitution in Tiv land.

Before then, prostitution was unknown in the traditional Tiv society because of the way that every unholy practice was guarded by a cult with taboos and punishment for defaulters. Some prostitutes are well trained dancers, strip-teasers and singers; they perform in certain night clubs and provide entertainment both in the form of music and dance, and in the form of recreational sex to their patrons (Anyam, Moral Appraisal of ... 76). Ikyese Iorngurum confirmed that these unwanton behaviours were not tolerated in the entire Tiv land (Oral interview).

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 SUMMARY

Virginity and pre-marital sex are amongst the moral issues that linger in the contemporary Tiv society. This study has investigated the position of these concepts in the pre-colonial Tiv and found that virginity was greatly cherished in Tiv society for the sake of upholding purity, chastity and fidelity before marriage. The observance of female virginity was seen as a necessary condition to be fulfilled before the acceptance of marriage. This was not only done by the Tiv but by some other African societies.

The work looked at various views concerning the practice of virginity in Tiv and other areas, its relevance or importance on the Tiv as well as the challenges of abandoning it. Efforts have also been made to assess the adoption of *Ikyôôr* cult by the Tiv. It has been noted that *Ikyôôr* cult was traditionally ordained and adopted by the Tiv to regulate sexual misconduct. In doing this, the Tiv established the religiosity of the *Ikyôôr* cult which was characterised by its stiff sanctions, taboos and its purging rites and was ultimately accepted by most parts of the Tiv and the primary aim of the *Ikyôôr* was to preserve virginity, protect virgins and for chastity.

Violation of this cult was accompanied by severe punishment until appropriate appeasement was performed. The moral perspective surrounding the *Ikyôôr* cult was that, there were no cases of sexual moral decadence, sexual misconduct was easily dictated whenever they occurred. Even though among the Tiv, the *Ikyôôr* tradition was not instituted in MINDA geo-political zone which comprises of Masev, Ihyarev, Nongov, the idea of “ikyar” tradition in these areas too was meant to confine girls within an area in which they will not be exposed to waywardness.

The work examined the moral life of the Tiv before the advent of Christianity and Western civilisation, and the Tiv today and found that modernity and Christianity have been an enemy to the Tiv traditional values, especially that of *Ikyôôr*, which is seen as an element of witchcraft. *Ikyôôr* cult which once served as guidance to virginity has gone extinct and virginity is no longer regarded as a yardstick for validity of marriage.

The work therefore suggests ways of curbing pre-marital sex in Tiv. First, it advocates the introduction of sex education in the school curricula. Sex is good but must be engaged in at the right time and the right time for sex is marriage. The family is the foundation for moral teaching and families should not abandon their responsibilities. Religious institutions should also help in shaping children's character, creation of job opportunities for the youth etc.

6.2 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The study made the following contribution:

Tiv religio-ethical thought system places value on sexual chastity, decency and virginity. Their values were guided with jealousy until now; there are various abuses that are eroding these core values in Tiv sexual morality.

Virginity is a key issue in Tiv sexual ethics. In Tiv religio-ethical thought system, it is a key value upon which the Tiv family is built. However, this central value that was once held in high esteem is now abused and misused.

The incidence of pre-marital sex is becoming alarming among the Tiv like other cultures. This is due to the neglect of traditional values and practices like *Ikyôôr* cult which was used as a way of persevering among unmarried girls in Tiv.

The high incidence of premarital sex in Tiv society today could be attributed to westernisation, declining role of traditional institutions and practice and Christianity.

Premarital sex and disrespect for virginity is also a factor that is affecting the foundation of marriages today, consequently, the cases of divorce and dysfunctioning marriages are rising on daily basis.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Having critically analysed the Tiv thought system concerning virginity and pre-marital sex, the following recommendations suffice as working tools towards the realisation of the moral dreams in the reconstruction, restricting and reorientation of the Tiv youths to reinstate confidence, dignity, chastity and value gradually being eroded by some immoral conducts and teachings of modernisation.

There is need for a renewed interest in the study of Tiv morality, assuming this posture means saving our inherent traditional values. The African society in general and the Tiv in particular must go back to their roots. To achieve this, the Tiv must work towards restoring their morality which was based purely on their customs, norms and values. This could be through the family, traditional leaders who are the custodians of Tiv values, the community, the church, the government, Mass Media, etc.

The Role of the Family: the family is the foundation for moral teaching. It is a primary unit of a wider society and therefore should make efforts towards inculcating moral values which are held by the entire community or society. The family ever since has always played a crucial part in training children. It lays the foundation both moral and spiritual in which the child is built later. Even when there were no formal schools, the family played an important role in knowledge acquisition, skills and

attitudes. Therefore, for us to bring back what is lost, we must intensify home training and find appropriate ways of making it work since the formative years of a child are known to be most crucial in his or her character formation. The family is the bedrock of authentic formation to chaste living.

Education in sexuality and formation for chastity constitutes one of the major areas of children. It is in the family that every child discovers the meaning of human love. At the same time, the child learns to value human love as well as the difficulties inherent in living. Thus, family is the primary co-operator and most natural setting for formation in a child's living. Indeed Christian parents discerning the signs of God's call should devote to education in virginity as the supreme form of that self-giving that constitutes the very meaning of human sexuality. The study therefore encourages parents to give adequate education on human sexuality and morality to their children. Because such an important function of parents is no longer taken seriously, the child grows to see nothing wrong with being engaged into pre-marital sex. Parents have to rise to their responsibilities as first teachers of their children if the fight against pre-marital sex is to succeed. When children come out of homes whose parents do not care about their disciplines, the parents come to their rescue regardless of the gravity of the crime they commit in the society. This type of condition further compounds the situation of the children who continue to have distorted notion of value in the society. To such children, going out to engage in pre-marital affairs would automatically get the approval of their parents who sometimes are into that kind of behaviour themselves (extra-marital affairs); such cannot help fight against pre-marital sex. The work calls for parents and guardians to not only provide the necessary needs of their wards but also spend quality time with them at home and teach them morals at early stage.

The Role of the Church: this is equally important, because it has the capability to save the Tiv from total decay. In doing this, less emphasis should be placed on prosperity and getting large congregation but a church that will know how to speak to its members, comfort them, invite, welcome, and instil values like peace, love, truthfulness, righteousness, fidelity, chastity etc., accepts people as their brother's keepers. The Church leaders, priests and pastors should continue to preach against immorality, especially premarital sex, that sex is good but must be taken at the right time and there should be conscious efforts at organising seminars for youths in their various Churches. Every Christian too lives out his/her experiences of faith in the ecclesial community of a local church. The call of God to priesthood and religious life is likewise given to those who are part of a church. Such a church where the members live their lives faithfully is a source of great help and support for each one in the community. Hence, the church has an indispensable part to play in the emergence of chaste living. This role can be effectively played if the church, the religious and the adult lay faithful influence the young by the example of their lives.

The promotion of chaplaincy services in institutions of higher learning is another step that can go a long way in educating the youths to avoid the appetite for pre-marital sex. It is commendable that many denominations are doing their best in this regard through chaplaincies services in Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Secondary Schools, but more needs to be done. With the presence of the clergy of various denominations in campuses to give sound moral and spiritual guides to students, it will contribute meaningfully to tackle immorality and pre-marital sex in the various forms. Different denominations should be able to provide care for the faith of these young ones so that they can grow to realise that the glamour for sex before marriage is not a good one. Most Christian denominations own private

schools that are licensed by the government. These schools are principally meant to be citadels of not only intellectual learning but also moral discipline. Over the years, mission schools have earned the reputation of giving good backgrounds to persons of integrity and leadership in the society. This background must not be allowed to fade away in the face of the present trend. Mission schools must be seen as custodians of moral discipline to guide the young who are likely to fall prey to sex before marriage if not well informed on moral discipline.

To this end, the Hindu religion has something to offer to the youths in their teaching on Brahmacharya; which is “spotless chastity or purity in thought and deed”. It is the absolute freedom from sexual activity of whatever kind. This is very useful and necessary, especially in the present generation.

Poverty is identified as one of the factors that lead some youths to fall in their chaste living, premised on this, attention should be given to the welfare of children by their parents, guardian, especially the adolescents for they are more vulnerable to fall when tempted with money and other basic human needs far from their reach. To this end, hard work is recommended when you are poor strive to engage in entrepreneurial jobs, that will keep you busy, since idleness and laziness are also factors that militates some youths into immorality. Parents should develop or encourage youths to engage into programmes that will keep them busy. This will guard against the possibility of thinking lustfully. Tiv elite should help and encourage the youths to take up gainful employment while in school which would help alleviate poverty and detest from immoral acts.

Youths should avoid Intoxication: intoxicants destroy both physical and mental health. No one can be determined if he/she gets intoxicated, nor can he remain healthy as a youth. The pleasures derived from intoxicants might seem like nectar

from the beginning, but they are poison in the end. Youth should be encouraged to avoid alcohol, they should rather engage in proper physical exercise so that when they master the muscles, they can more easily master the senses. Physical exercises tone and strengthen the heart, lungs and muscles, quiet the nerves, increases blood circulation, eliminate poison and decreases lust. Those who shun exercises are more likely to be overtly absorbed with sex and sense gratification. Youths should try to take care of the body by making sure it gets sufficient exercise.

Avoid Rationalisation: The mind can be very tricky and present many reasons to abandon sexual control. It is the habit of the mind to first accept and then reject. The mind can think of a thousand reasons to act or not to act. If we listen to the reasons of the mind, which are very often generalisations, we will never be resolute in our good intentions to sexual control. Youths should try to understand the mind's rationalisation to engage in sense gratification.

Example of Formators and Teachers: the teachers and formators have crucial role in the formation of children; they should be people who are sexually mature and emotionally balanced. They need themselves to be thoroughly formed and be given adequate training and retraining in order to equip them for their work. Teachers must be thoroughly conversant with the vagaries of human nature and its development. Formators must create a formation environment where teachers and students seek to know the depth of the human heart. Above all, teachers should first and foremost, teach by the example of their own lives. Institutions of learning are places where the future of the society belongs. Unless institutions of learning inculcate proper formation into the students, the mental and physical development of students can be fragile in the face of contradictory values that can promote things like pre-marital sex, prostitution, drug abuse, etc. Accordingly, the following steps will be of importance to

guarantee the full participation of our institutions of learning in the fight against these social ills.

Once the inclusion of the menace of pre-marital sex and others is done by the ministry of education, the teachers will then be left with the responsibility of ensuring that the topic is treated well inside and outside the classroom. In treating the issue of pre-marital sex, teachers will have to employ practical demonstrations like pictures and film shows to show how devastating the menace is. This can go a long way in combating the trend.

Inter-schools debates, conferences and symposia can be organised to bring students together for discussions on the issue of pre-marital sex. Through these academic channels, teachers can create among students,, various discussions on the issue of pre-marital sex. The students who are not able to hear of such happenings can through cross-pollination of ideas come to know of the happenings of the victims of pre-marital sex.

It is something commendable that some universities are beginning to raise alarm about the dressing styles of some of the female students. This action is caused by the fact that some of the female students are beginning to dress in such a ways as to suggest tendencies towards sexual licentiousness. This action of the authorities of some of the universities like in the University of Jos, Lagos, Madonna and Benue State Universities are to be encouraged in order to discourage the naked invitation to the activities of pre-marital sex. Such an environment that frowns at near nudity can help students avoid the trap of pre-marital sex. With the efforts of the universities well harnessed, the authorities of various universities can push for sponsorship of policy oriented research in the area of immorality. Considering the effects of immorality on the future of the society, professors cannot but seek for ways of research sponsorship

to enable scholars dig into the complexities of the menace and proffer solution as to how to fight it. More research into causes of pre-marital sex can expose more the activities and the students will be better equipped about how to avoid giving in to factors that can lead them into pre-marital sex. Institutions of learning can indeed do a lot in the fight against pre-marital sex. As citadels of learning, what they teach goes a long way to shape the minds of students who in turn will become future leaders of the society.

Traditional institutions are also one of the most revered institutions in the Tiv society. There can be no mention of upholding traditional values without traditional institutions. It is in this light that traditional rulers should seek the continuous respect of the values of the society like obedience, moral discipline and community spirit which are in many respects at variance with the behaviour of pre-marital sex. With emphasis on obedience, moral uprightness and community spirit, pre-marital sex and extra marital affairs will not occupy the minds of women and girls.

Traditional rulers should not only emphasise the need for respect for societal values but also enlighten their subjects on these societal values because many in this generation belong to antiquity and are superseded by modernisation typified by unguarded sexual liberty. Such enlightenment can go a long way in awakening the consciousness of the youth in a special way to avoid disrespect to cultures in the name of modernisation. Traditional rulers can further stress that values that safeguard humanity transcend time and generations. If values are stressed as transcending generations, avoidance of pre-marital will not be viewed as out dated. Apart from emphasising the dignity of maintaining our traditional values, traditional rulers can come out in practical ways to voice out their displeasure for the culture pre-marital and other social ills like drug abuse, etc.

Traditional rulers can equally come together in their meetings like state traditional councils to make joint pronouncement in the form of communiqués frowning at the menace of pre-marital and other social ills. The coming together of traditional fathers in this form will then speak loud enough. In an age of multimedia communication such as ours, various traditional rulers cannot be seen to be left behind in exploring such advantages. Traditional rulers can, on individual or collective levels sponsor campaigns through radio, television, bill boards and cultural gatherings to promote the fight against pre-marital sex and other social ills that affects the youth in Tiv society.

The voices of the traditional rulers are indeed very significant in the fight against pre-marital sex if success must be recorded. Traditional rulers represent the traditional values of communities that make up Tiv nation and as they lead their voices against pre-marital sex, it will go a long way to fight pre-marital sex. Since this fight is a fight that needs everyone on board, the effort of the print and electronic media is also needed.

The Print and Electronic Media: The world today is ordered by the print and electronic media. It is in this light that the power of the media is great in the struggle against pre-marital sex and other social ills. The media have the capacity of painting a wonderful picture of what Tiv women and girls do and many will believe it. The media equally have the potential of putting in clear perspective the menace of pre-marital sex and changes can be positively effected. Accordingly, the efforts of the print and electronic media will be as follows.

The print and electronic media have contributed in publicising the activities of pre-marital sex e.g “zip up” and “abstinence”. This support has been in the promotion of the campaigns of the government and the non-governmental organisation in the

fight against pre-marital sex. The promotion of immoral programmes and films should be encouraged by the media since the young are often the first victims of such. More programmes which portray the riches of societal values like sexual restraint should be discouraged. Such programmes that uphold virginity and frown at immoral behaviour should be encouraged. Through this, the young will grow to appreciate the dignity of sexual discipline and not seek to imitate something that runs contrary to decency.

The film industry can significantly serve as the means of promoting the cause of anti-pre-marital sex crusade. The film industry passes quick visual messages and can be a wonderful instrument for the fight against pre-marital sex. The home video is big business today in Tiv and is patronised by many homes in the country. Through the joint efforts of producers, actors/actress and marketers, the message depicting the horrors of pre-marital sex can be brought out in films. The importance of the print and electronic media in the fight against pre-marital sex cannot be over emphasised. This is an age of mass media and its full benefits must be brought to bear on Tiv and the nation at large. The media indeed hold a significant place if the struggle against pre-marital sex is to succeed.

The norms and values of the Tiv like that of *Ikyôôr* should be given a serious attention. *Ikyôôr* should be modernized to stand a taste of time. This understanding is very useful especially now that the Tiv are multiplying exceedingly and new problems and challenges are evolving every day, such as sexual immorality and incurable diseases. In the past, Tiv values were adopted to sustain morality and to unite them in harmony with common identity and culture. The harmonious unity and identity of ancient Tiv can still be maintained if proper attention is being given to the tradition. There should be a new approach in the study of the olden traditional values. By this position, many of the inherent traditional codes will be amplified.

Contemporary scholars with research interest in Tiv should understand that morality is the main anchor that stabilizes the unity of the Tiv nation in the pre-colonial era. Therefore, they should encourage other researchers not to shy away from researching on contemporary moral issues that will help build the Tiv, they should understand writing on Tiv culture will help the younger generation and encourage them to learn about their culture. To this end, the study recommends the efforts of Dzurgba, Shishima, Waapela, Adega, Torkula, Iortyom, Gbor, Wegh, etc. They should do more, since this is improving and giving colour or exposing the Tiv culture in a positive light.

Even though abstinence is not easy, it keeps one free from all the consequences of pre-marital sex and sex outside marriage. Self-control and discipline are important virtues that are useful in sexual morality. The involvement of every person and every organisation, the government, medical, legal fraternities, pharmaceutical companies and businesses, communities is recommended here.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Having examined what was obtained in the pre-colonial Tiv society, it is no doubt that colonialism brought both positive and negative changes in African societies in general and the Tiv in particular. It is true that before the advent of colonial rule or western culture in Tivland, the Tiv had strong traditional values that held them together, but a reflection on modern Tiv morality is thus a reaction contrary to the Tiv morality. Traditional taboos and sanctions are no longer valued, and a new way of life has taken over which leads to a new kind of morality.

There are several reasons why many societies value women or girls who have preserved their virginity prior to entering into marriage. Though some are of the opinion that the preservation of virginity has no relevance in today's world and as

such should not be a topic of discussion. This work argues with relevant reasons that the preservation of virginity should be discussed.

The African traditional societies in general and the Tiv in particular have a sense of morality which is imbedded in their lifestyle and this ethical values help to guide and regulate the conduct of individuals in the society. Virginity, for instance, was greatly cherished and honoured for the sake of upholding purity, chastity and fidelity before marriage. This was done through the tying of the snail shell on the girl's neck by *Ingbian-Jov* priestess. *Ikyôôr* cult was traditionally ordained and adopted by the Tiv to regulate sexual conduct, preserve and protect virgins until they are matured for marriage. By so doing this established the religiosity of the *Ikyôôr* cult which was characterized by its stiff sanctions and taboos. Its violation accompanied severe punishments until appropriate appeasement was done. The moral perspective surrounding the *Ikyôôr* cult was that cases of sexual moral decadence were minimal since sexual misconduct was easily dictated whenever they occurred.

The work, therefore, calls for the contemporary scholars with research interest in Tiv to take a second look at the situation with the understanding that morality is the main anchor that stabilises the unity of Tiv nation in the pre-colonial era and since it has gone extinct, it must be revived instead of shying away from researching on the contemporary moral issue. It is only by doing this that our traditional values, and codes will be amplified and help build our Tiv nation to what it used to be in the pre-colonial time. The research finally calls for a return to the practice of *Ikyôôr* cult in a 'modernised form' since it can help restore the moral life of the Tiv man.

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APPENDIX I

LIST OF INFORMANTS

S/No	Name	Sex	Age	Status	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
1.	Tarkighir Ubwa	M	49	Farmer	Logo, Ugba Town	10/03/2011
2.	Mtomga Saave	M	50	Teacher	Gboko	11/03/2011
3.	Ushabo Adingir	M	61	Businness man	Makurdi, Yakyor	17/06/2011
4.	Mama Chombu Benga	F	67	Teacher	Kwande, Mbaiwen	10/10/2011
5.	Mtserakyaa Alom	M	58	Teacher	Makurdi	14/10/2011
6.	Ayankaa Vendega	M	49	Farmer	Makurdi	25/10/2011
7.	Ngivan Ukumaga	F	50	Teacher	Logo, Ugba	02/11/2011
8.	Ikpator Ujege	F	60	Businessman	Katsina-Ala	03/11/2011
9.	Iyoughyo Ayado	F	55	Farmer	Gboko, Adekaa	28/11/2011
10.	Ivase Gateh	M	60	Trader	Vandeikya	20/02/2012
11.	Mama Adugh Kpamnende	F	60	Farmer	Makurdi	19/1/2013
12.	Hunde Yarkwan	F	65	Teacher	Makurdi	19/1/2013
13.	Ihungwa Yua	M	53	Businessman	Makurdi	19/1/2013
14.	Mama Ayam	F	58	Farmer	Ugba/Logo	2/2/2013
15.	Mama Ibunde	F	69	Farmer	Mede/Vandeikya	10/2/2013
16.	Torkwase Tserva	F	51	Farmer	Mede/Vandeikya	10/2/2013
17.	Ayangahengur Adema	F	68	Trader	Ugba/Logo	2/2/2013
18.	Ikpaor Tyough	M	58	Trader	Gboko	24/2/2013
19.	Adugh Kpamnande	F	53	Businessman	Gboko	24/2/2013
20.	Ikpayagh Antembe	F	59	Trader	Kwande	3/3/2013
21.	AmatsoTaryima	M	59	Farmer	Logo	20/6/2014

22.	Akaar Nyam	M	67	Farmer	Gboko	15/6/2014
23.	Akighir Zungwe	M	52	Farmer	Logo	20/6/2014
24.	Adohor Hur	F	60	Business	Gboko	15/6/2014
25.	Atondo Iyo	M	49	Business	Kwande	30/6/2014
26.	Afanyo Udum	F	51	Teacher	Vandeikya	2/6/2014
27.	Mbazendan Udele	F	62	Farmer	Vandeikya	2/6/2014
28.	Tile Agev	F	69	Farmer	Gboko	15/6/2014
29.	Akaar Nyam	M	67	Farmer	Gboko	15/6/2014
30.	Adohor Hur	F	60	Business	Gboko	15/6/2014
31.	Avungu Tsor	M	62	Farmer	Logo	20/6/2014
32.	Ayenge Begh	F	67	Farmer	Logo	20/6/2014
33.	Amatso Taryima	M	59	Farmer	Logo	20/6/2014
34.	Akighir Zungwe	M	52	Farmer	Logo	20/6/2014
35.	Ayenge Begh	F	67	Farmer	Logo	20/6/2014
36.	Ayilamo Tortya	M	49	Civil Servant	Makurdi	28/6/2014
37.	Gbue Zuamo	M	55	Teacher	Makurdi	28/6/2014
38.	Iyoughwe Asema	F	56	Teacher	Makurdi	28/6/2014
39.	Ayilamo Tortya	M	49	Civil Servant	Makurdi	28/6/2014
40.	Iyoughwe Asema	F	56	Teacher	Makurdi	28/6/2014
41.	Shivaa Tembego	F	60	Business	Kwande	30/6/2014
42.	Mbakeren Tsavbu	F	65	Farmer	Kwande	30/6/2014
43.	Igbinda Veor	M	60	Farmer	Kwande	30/6/2014
44.	Sambe Dzua	F	48	Trader	Gboko	2/7/2014
45.	Ikyomku Ayilamo	F	48	Trader	Makurdi	2/7/2014

46.	Akende Shabem	M	50	Civil Servant	Makurdi	21/7/2014
47.	Akaayar Ushageri	M	56	Civil Servant	Makurdi	21/7/2014
48.	Eje Clement	M	58	Civil servant	Makurdi	10/12/2015
49.	Joseph Nyiyongo	M	55	Civil servant	Makurdi	10/12/2015
50.	Afai Tsua	F	62	Farmer	Logo	20/12/2015
51.	Jabi Angough	F	60	Farmer	Logo	20/12/2015
52.	Nguzugwen Ku	F	52	Farmer	Gboko	11/01/2016
53.	Ashioron Gwer	F	57	Trader	Gboko	11/01/2016
54.	Ihyomo Amber	M	48	Businessman	Makurdi	12/02/2016
55.	Mbaoron Uvia	F	51	Trader	Gboko	15/02/2016
56.	Ngizan Adingir	F	49	Trader	Makurdi	26/02/2016
57.	Tondo Ajai	M	57	Trader	Vandeikya	16/03/2016
58.	Apeinem Kyura	F	51	Civil servant	Makurdi	05/04/2016
59.	Gbakaan Hwande	M	53	Civil servant	Makurdi	05/04/2016
60.	Ikyese Iorngurum	M	47	Businessman	Gboko	30/04/2016
61.	Ibunde Wayo	F	40	Trader	Kwande	10/05/2016
62.	Zendesha Agena	M	45	Businessman	Kwande	10/05/2016
63.	Mamadu Suliman	M	60	Farmer	Makurdi	18/12/2016
64.	Bendega She	M	49	Farmer	Makurdi	18/12/2016
65.	Adzer Nongo	M	65	Business	Makurdi	18/12/2016
66.	Ngoban Ior	F	50	Trader	Makurdi	18/12/2016
67.	Shimier Torfa	F	71	Farmer	Makurdi	18/12/2016
68.	Alueshima Sar	F	48	Business	Makurdi	18/12/2016
69.	Ngumom Shiwua	F	58	Civil Service	Makurdi	18/12/2016

70.	Kyurtar Ver	M	65	Trader	Makurdi	18/12/2016
71.	Ashi Torkighir	F	51	Civil Service	Makurdi	18/12/2016
72.	Movihinze Maza	F	58	Trader	Makurdi	18/12/2016
73.	Hongo Aluena	F	71	Trader	Gboko	24/12/2016
74.	Vembera Shisha	M	52	Civil Servant	Gboko	24/12/2016
75.	Akaabiam Nyiutsa	M	57	Farmer	Gboko	24/12/2016
76.	Tarzoho Kilotyo	M	49	Civil Servant	Gboko	24/12/2016
77.	Anenge Dzever	M	48	Civil Servant	Gboko	24/12/2016
78.	Tulen Temen	M	53	Civil Servant	Gboko	24/12/2016
79.	Mbatoon Melaba	F	61	Business	Gboko	24/12/2016
80.	Adaga Mluna	F	64	Famar	Adikpo	25/12/2016
81.	Veror Tsergen	M	63	Business	Adikpo	25/12/2016
82.	Azuana Tarpav	M	58	Business	Adikpo	25/12/2016
83.	Chieshe Tsavmbu	M	54	Civil Service	Adikpo	25/12/2016
84.	Wombo Anzenge	M	49	Civil Service	Adikpo	25/12/2016
85.	Mwakan Nyityo	M	50	Civil Service	Adikpo	25/12/2016
86.	Iorza Amoakaa	M	68	Business	Adikpo	25/12/2016
87.	Tiza Fefe	M	66	Business	Adikpo	25/12/2016
88.	Mbavan Iortyer	M	74	Trader	Adikpo	25/12/2016
89.	Ashilu Tindi	F	78	Trader	Adikpo	25/12/2016
90.	Mbunde Abagu	F	73	Trader	Logo	31/12/2016
91.	Tartongo Dzuana	M	49	Civil Service	Logo	31/12/2016
92.	Vihive Tartenger	F	58	Civil Service	Logo	31/12/2016
93.	Mbahiin Torna	F	49	Civil service	Logo	31/12/2016

94.	Alaghga Bologo	M	55	Civil Service	Logo	31/12/2016
95.	Verunaga Adean	M	52	Farmer	Logo	31/12/2016
96.	Chombu Ikyuve	F	57	Farmer	Logo	31/12/2016
97.	Alueshimana Tyovenda	F	65	Farmer	Makurdi	1/5/2017
98.	Ashekuma Tombuwua	F	55	Trader	Makurdi	10/5/2017
99.	Angershishi Zugu	F	76	Farmer	Gwer East	29/1/2018
100.	Mzamber Asoo	F	78	Farmer	Gwer East	29/1/2018

APPENDIX II

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Department of Religion and
Cultural Studies,
Benue State University,
Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

Dear Respondent (s),

I am a post graduate student (Ph.D) of the above named University, carrying out a research on “A Religio-Ethical Analysis of Tiv Thought System Concerning Virginity and Pre-marital Sex”.

I hereby solicit your response to the following questions which bothers on Tiv Religious Ethics and Culture. I assure you that the information given shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and strictly used for the purpose of this research.

Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Mwuese Saluun
BSU/AR/PhD/09/1297

APPENDIX III

ORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ADMINISTERED ON SELECTED RESPONDENTS ACROSS TIVLAND

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

1. Sir/Madam, what are your full names?
2. How old are you?
3. What is the name of your locality?
4. What do you do for a living?

SECTION B: ORAL INTERVIEW FORMAT

1. Can you explain or give your knowledge of the word virginity?
2. Do you think there is any importance attached to either observing or preserving virginity?
3. Is there any gain from the family whose daughter is given to marriage as a virgin?
4. Do you think the practice of virginity is no longer valued?
5. Do you think it is still necessary for the Tiv to continue practising virginity?
6. Do you think the practice of Christianity is affecting the people in many ways?
7. Do you think the practice of virginity has anything on the society?
8. Are there any moral issues in preserving virginity?
9. Does it have any role to play in married couples?
10. And if the above is true, does it portray moral decadence?